

Thakkar Commission Report

An Anti-Climax

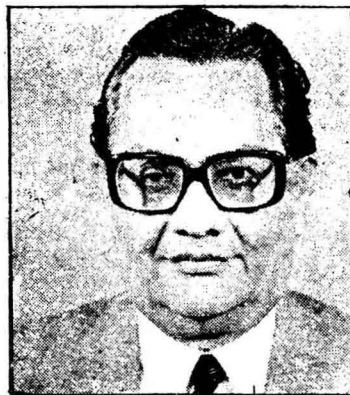
By Amrik Singh

One wonders why the report of the Thakkar Commission was made into an issue. The summary published in newspapers reveals nothing new. All that it does is to provide more details of what was already known.

It was widely known and in fact did not need any demonstration or proof that the security set up had been lax. Had everyone performed his duty, the tragedy could have been averted. What Justice Thakkar has done is to name certain individuals and charge them with laxity and incompetence. It must be said to his credit that he is even-handed in blaming whoever was guilty. That he blames certain individuals (RN Kao, and SC Tandon for instance) in particular goes to show that he did not spare anyone.

It was also known that the emergency medical arrangements had failed to function. What he has done is to give more details. Even in regard to RK Dhawan, there is no element of surprise. When *The*

Indian Express broke the story first, it was Justice Thakkar's observations in regard to RK Dhawan that had been featured



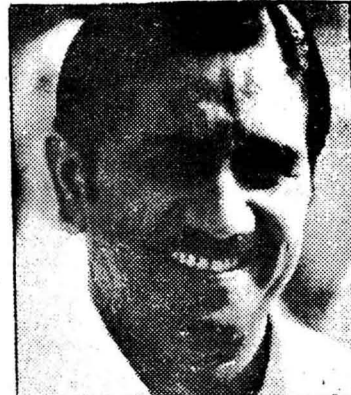
Justice Thakkar

prominently. What the report has to say is not all that novel or weighty therefore.

Motive

That is why there is a sense of being let down on the part of most people. They feel that they knew all this and therefore wonder

why was it that the report was not released earlier or when it was demanded by the opposition. In plain words, what one has to go



R K Dhawan

into is the motive of the government in withholding the report and not what is contained in the report.

As far as one can judge, an avoidable kind of adverse relationship has got evolved between the government and the opposition. They oppose each other, not always because there is an issue

or an occasion, but because if one party says one thing the other party must oppose it.

In this case what happened was something like this. *The Indian Express* carried a report and, because that paper had carried it, it became reason enough for the government to refuse to make it public. This is the real issue. Anyone who chooses to project some other explanation is trying to obscure the real issue.

Of course there is the other contention that the entire report has not been made available to Parliament and maybe there is something in the withheld portion which is perhaps somewhat more explosive. Once that becomes available the situation may change. It is not possible to offer any meaningful comment in regard to this point of view. There was so much of suspense about what was placed in Parliament on 27 March 1989. It turned out, however, that the suspense was without any real basis. Whether the withheld portion of the report also falls under

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'Act'ed To Slay Freedom Of Religion

By FG Correspondent

The Religious Institutions (Prevention of Misuse) Act, 1988, once again projects the government's inability to apply the existing laws effectively and it also indicates a total lack of political will on the part of the government in making use of such laws. Storage of unlicensed arms and ammunitions, or harbouring of proclaimed criminals or undesirables, use of religious places for communal incitements or insults and all such unwarranted acts can be dealt with under the existing laws. Therefore, the necessity of this particular Act is zero and it is clear that it is designed to aim at something else.

The Act gives the bureaucracy, which is normally at the lowest level of the decision-making hier-

archy, arbitrary, excessive and unguided powers. So there will be a tendency to interpret any activity as undesirable or political in nature by the often-biased law implementing instruments of our polity. Thus the Act is likely to be misused against issues, causes and activities considered undesirable by the power structure and establishments, and it will eventually torpedo the democratic system and the freedom of religion. Therefore, the government should reconsider the Act for withdrawing it and stop the craze for more and more laws without adequate brainwork.

In a memorandum submitted to the President Mr R Venkataraman, on January, 1989, Lt.Col. Manohar Singh (retd), the convenor of the South Delhi Singh Sabhas, urged him to take all immediate

steps to withdraw the Act to avoid confrontation between the government and various religious institutions. In a twenty-minute discussion that Mr Manohar Singh had with the President, the former apprised the President of the consequences of the Act and how it would jeopardise the supreme spiritual institution of the Sikhs, the Akal Takht. He told the President that the Akal Takht was the Indian fountain from where opposition was rising against tyrannies. The institution of Akal Takht is not to create a new country, but to protect India. As this Act directly strikes at the very root of the Sikh faith, a total community would be fighting against this black law and thus against the government.

Any anti-national speech, no matter whether it is made in a gurdwara, a temple, a mosque, or

from Boat Club ground in Delhi, or even from the Parliament, Mr Manohar Singh told the President, is culpable under the present laws and the person concerned should be charge-sheeted for offence against the interest of the country. So why mention it that such statements cannot be made in a gurdwara and at the same time one can utter anything one likes from the Boat Club?

One of the provisions of the Act is about the harbouring and sheltering of terrorists. This can be used to stall even the day-to-day affairs of gurdwaras. To cite an example: hundreds of devotees are given food in gurdwaras everyday. If one man who was given food in a gurdwara was later found to be a terrorist by the police, the Manager of the gurd-

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LETTERS

Free The Intellectuals

Most of the right-thinking people in the country would welcome the acquittal of the 46 intellectuals; mostly poets and writers belonging to the Revolutionary Writers' Association at Secunderabad recently.

The case was filed in 1974. The attitude of the governments in power, whether Congress, Congress (I) or Telugu Desam, was the same during the 15 years of the case. The crime these people committed was that they simply raised their voice against social injustice. The governments in power subjected the critics to severe repression instead of going into the roots of the protest.

Similar to this, in Bihar Virendra Vidrohi and Amarjit Singh Sohi continue to be in jail. The three Professors of Bombay have recently been released after many months of confinement.

The Secunderabad case shows the nature of the present judicial process. It is high time the government released Amarjit Singh Sohi and Virendra Vidrohi as the cases against them are also false ones.

The release of all detainees, who are not involved in any case, and are in jail for political reasons like Simranjeet Singh Mann, Prakash Singh Badal, G.S. Tohra, etc. would be a step towards creating a democratic climate in the country.

Neena Swaroop

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Secunderabad Verdict

The acquittal of 46 intellectuals—most of them poets and writers belonging to the Revolutionary Writers' Association—in

the Secunderabad Conspiracy case is a significant development which would be welcomed by democratic forces everywhere. The case which was filed in August 1974 had accused the writers of "waging war against the state". The Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge of Hyderabad did not find the evidence convincing nor did he accept the prosecution argument that the writing pointing out people's problems and calling for resistance were seditious.

The case exposed the attitude of the Government towards writers who raised the voice of protest against social injustice. Rather than respect the freedom of expression and go into the roots of the protest, the authorities subjected the critics to severe repression. The dissenters were put under conspiracy case or under NSA and TADA.

Poet Vara Vara Rao, editor of Srjana, who was an accused in the Secunderabad Conspiracy Case cannot get relief out of this decision because there are NSA, TADA and a few more alleged conspiracy cases still pending against him. In Bihar Virendra Vidrohi and Amarjit Singh Sohi are languishing in jail. These are only a few instances of the repression against critical intellectuals. The revolutionary Writers' Association members in Andhra have been subjected to police terror for several years now.

The Secunderabad Case illustrates the nature of our judicial process. During fourteen and a half years of trial ten judges handled it one after another—in one instance a judge happened to be a former prosecutor of the case. The public prosecutor rather than discharging his statutory obligation functioned as a mouthpiece of the police.

During the protracted trial poet Cheravandaraju died in jail. Two of the accused died in "encounters". Even though there has been change of the parties in power from the Congress to the Congress (I) and Telugu Desam, there has been no change in the attitude of the Government.

The People's Union for Democratic Rights calls upon democra-

tic forces to demand the withdrawal of all conspiracy cases. It demands immediate release of Vara Vara Rao and of Amarjit Singh Sohi and Virendra Vidrohi who are facing false cases. This would be a step towards creating a democratic climate in the country.

Manoranjan Mohanty

People's Union for
Democratic Rights
Provost's Lodge
International Students' House
Delhi University
DELHI-110007.

Neither Temple,
Nor Mosque,
Make It Gurdwara

Much has been said and suggested about the Babri Masjid controversy. One of the suggestions was that it be converted into a national monument open to all, but it did not find favour because amongst other things, people would be entering a sacred place with shoes on, etc., and defile the place.

I suggest that it be converted into a gurdwara which has the sacred Granth Sahib which contains the teachings of both Muslim and Hindu saints. And above all, a gurdwara is open to all races, too.

Amrik Singh

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Sound And Fury

Do your duty and leave the rest to God.
- Mr Justice M.P. Thakkar.

People of this country know who are loyal to Indira Gandhi. This report (of Mr. Justice Thakkar) (shall not be placed in this House.
- Mr Buta Singh in the Lok Sabha.

Truth should not be concealed.
- Mr Jyoti Basu.

If people want the truth, I am there to tell them.
- Mr Subramaniam Swamy.

"Lie" is not unparliamentary.
- Mr Vasant Sathe.

You have won on Indira Gandhi's sacrifices and you should be ashamed to defend her assassin.
- Mr Arif Mohammad Khan to Congress(I) members.

Mr. R.K. Dhawan knows what is inside the marrow of Arun Nehru and that is why he is unnerved. The whole effort is to try and pull down a democratically elected government through concoctions.
- Mr K.K. Tewary.

I have been rewarded for my loyalty.
- Mr R.K. Dhawan.

If I take the rules in my hand, I will become the worst dictator.
- Mr Balram Jakhar.

We will accept you (Mr Jyoti Basu) as our dada, but will not brook your dadagari.
- Mr Chaturanan Misra, CPI leader.

Of course, I am not for Rajputs alone, but for the whole people of the State.
- Mr Satyendra Narain Sinha, the new Chief Minister of Bihar.

You can be sure of Rajiv Gandhi making a lot more mistakes. One mistake he might commit is delaying the election. And this mistake will see to his doom.
- Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee.

It does not matter if Rajiv Gandhi, V.P. Singh, or L.K. Advani is the next Prime Minister. He will have to concede our demand.
- Mr Sharad Joshi of the Shetkari Sangathana.

I think the Presidential form of government is a good alternative.
- Dr Farooq Abdullah.

I want a militant Hindu and not a temple-going one.
Mr Bal Thackeray.

The Shiv Sena is authoritarian, builds itself on hatred, and vitiates our social and cultural fabric.
- Mr V.P. Singh.

There would not have been Bangladesh if there was no Pakistan.
- President H.M. Ershad.

I still have a glass of wine in the evening with dinner... Why shouldn't I? It is so little that it doesn't really matter.
- Mr John Tower.

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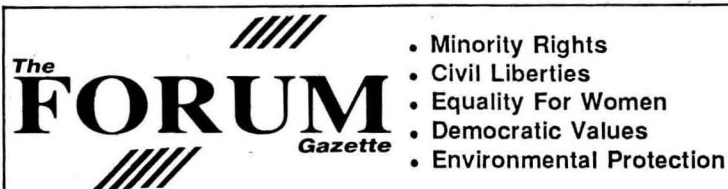
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NEWSHOUND



By Rap



The SGPC Tangle

To take sides in the current controversy in regard to how the SGPC affairs are being handled would be besides the point. For anyone who does not know the details and the manner in which funds have been pilfered and other questionable tactics adopted, it would not be fair to support this or that faction. For one allegation made, there are as many made on the other side. To add to that confusion in any way is not going to help.

Let us go back to the early 20's when the Sikh community had launched the struggle for the liberation of the gurdwaras from the traditional mahants. The eventual solution of having a statutory body created for the control of gurdwaras was a great victory for reason and justice. A quarter century before adult franchise came to be accepted elsewhere, this mode of representation was made applicable for the election to the SGPC. This was a famous victory, as they say.

What has happened since? Nobody can claim that the gurdwaras are being well-managed. Were they well-managed, some of the problems that face the Sikh community today would not have arisen. This is not to suggest that we should go back to the earlier system. On the contrary, this is a plea to give a fresh look to the system and at the same time take steps so that mismanagement and corruption are eliminated altogether.

There is also another angle. While the SGPC's primary job is to manage the gurdwaras, over the years it has also come to acquire a certain degree of political pre-eminence. Whoever controls the Golden Temple, they say, eventually controls Sikh politics. There is a good deal of truth in this statement. In consequence it becomes even more necessary to ensure that the SGPC is managed well.

One crucial step that requires to be taken is that the SGPC be detached from the politics of the community to the extent possible. An elementary step that requires to be taken is that whoever becomes a member of the SGPC should cease to be a member of any other elected body. In particular he should not be a member of the State Assembly or Parliament or hold any other elective office. This would clear up the atmosphere to some extent though it must be conceded that there are quite a few other things also that required to be done. It is not possible to go into each one of them at this stage except to refer to the need for a re-examination of the issue.

What is called for is to draw attention to the fact that the functioning of the SGPC gives an unmistakable impression of being a stagnant pool. For years together, the same people have continued to run the organisation. All that happens therefore is some minor reshuffling here and there but the structure of corruption and mismanagement which has been set up remains unchanged.

It is more than a decade since the SGPC was last elected. And when the last election was held, it had been after a lapse of 14 years. Clearly the irregularity of elections has a good deal to do with the stagnant atmosphere which prevails today. Without question, one of the things that would have to be done when any kind of re-structuring is undertaken is to ensure that the governments both Central and State, are not able to manipulate the holding of elections to suit their political ends. It should not be necessary to provide any further details. The case for a certain amendment of its structure is both obvious and unavoidable.

Those who oppose election in the current atmosphere of Punjab do have a point. But they must also be prepared to concede that one way of dealing with the situation would be to hold elections to the SGPC. There are people who argue that this would bring the terrorists to the fore. While this cannot be ruled out, it must also be acknowledged that this may not come to pass. Well, if that is going to happen, postponing the election to the SGPC is not going to solve the problem. The problem will have to be faced and not by adopting an ostrich-like attitude.

Panchayat elections are being talked of. It is said that these would be held in the month of May and perhaps not in the border districts but elsewhere. Without going into these details, it needs to be recognised that if Panchayat elections can be held, there is no argument whatsoever against the elections to the SGPC being held.

The uncomfortable fact seems to be that the powers that be seem to prefer the existing set up to a new set up. They find it possible to manipulate people who belong to the existing set up but they may not find it possible to do the same when a new set up comes into being. In plain words, everyone seems to have vested interests in the status quo.

What we witness today is the game of musical chairs. Somebody goes out of office and takes up another office and somebody else comes along and is then ousted and he finds another perch for himself and so on. Perhaps the only parallel to Akali infighting that one can discover in contemporary India, is the kind of infighting that has been going on in Tamil Nadu for some years.

But the question to ask is if this works in the interests of the Sikh community and the peace of the state.

Danger Signals From Jammu

By Balraj Puri

Jammu's emergence on the riot map of India has ominous implications transcending politics of the region in view of its geographical position as a link between Kashmir and the rest of India via Punjab.

No provocation could have justified killing of 14 innocent persons and destruction of property officially estimated, communal riot on January 13, and incalculable potential damage to the larger national interest. The self-inflicted injury to the body and soul of Jammu has also given a serious blow to the emerging regional identity and its quest for a status of honour and equality within the state.

Why did the people of Jammu suddenly become so unmindful of their patriotic obligations and their vital self-interest, not to speak of basic human values, when they had not done so for the last forty years? Not that Jammu was so far an ideal island of communal harmony with secure defences against communal waves around. But even graver provocations in the past had never caused any serious communal clash.

As far as Hindu-Sikh relations are concerned, 1984 was a far more critical year. Operation Blue-star had hurt Sikh psyche far more deeply than the hanging of Sant Singh and Kehar Singh could do. Similarly Hindus were far more outraged over the assassination of Mrs. Indira Gandhi than they could be over the slogans in favour of her assassins which are supposed to have triggered off the riot in Jammu on January 13, this year. But if the respective sharper reaction of the two communities in June 1984 and October-November 1984 could be contained, why could it not be done this year when the relations between the two communities had meanwhile perceptibly improved?

Cordial Relations

One such indication of better inter-communal relations was the return of two Sikh candidates to the State Assembly in the elections of 1987. Quick return of normalcy soon after the communal clash on January 13 and shelter given to thousands of the stranded persons by members of the other community again attests to the inherent sanity of Jammu's mind and to the fact that the violence was far out of proportion, if not entirely avoidable, to whatever tension that might have existed between the communities.

People of Jammu seem as bewildered as anybody else over how did it happen. Conspiracy theories are getting wide credence among them, for which foolproof evidence

would be hard to find. But some incontrovertible facts would indicate that the catastrophe might not have been worse if there had been a deliberate conspiracy behind it.

Even if lack of usual precautions, which should have been observed in a state supposed to be under red alert during those days, and lack of intelligence could be condoned, there is no national explanation for inaction of the administration for two and half hours when the confrontation between groups of the two communities kept on mounting.

Around noon of the tragic day, shops in the Hindu majority area on the route of the Sikh procession, on the eve of the birthday of Guru Gobind Singh, got closed in protest against some slogans raised in a part of the procession.

It is not only the police or the rest of the administration but the Government as a whole lost its prestige and credibility by the way the riot of January 13 and the post-riot situation handled

Hindu militants had taken positions to stop it after openly declaring their intention to the authorities to do so.

Police Inaction

There was ample time for the police to adopt either of the three courses. The small slogan shouting group could be isolated from the rest of the procession. Secondly, the route of the procession could have been diverted. Thirdly, adequate protection could have been provided to it. But instead of adopting any of these courses, the procession, which included a large number of children and women, was allowed to proceed to the point of inevitable confrontation at 2.30 p.m.

The worst could still have been avoided if the police had intervened effectively even at that stage. No fatal incident took place at the point of the first clash. Almost all killings took place after

an hour or so, far from that point near the exits from the city, at the bus stand and around it.

Incidents of arson and looting continued even after at places in the presence of the police. Allegations about the participation of the police in the loot in some places were also made.

Mysteriously almost all telephones of the city became dead soon after the incident. The control room and the police posts lost contact with each other. Its functioning was further handicapped by cut in its power supply and burning of its power transformer. All senior officers were thus cut off from the public and the rumours, which are the most lethal weapon in any riot, had a field day.

Following strong criticism of its handling of the situation, not the least by the Chief Minister himself, the administration swung into action and after a few days rounded up about 150 persons for their alleged involvement in the disturbance. But after a two-day hartal against this action, most of them were released; some of them bribed their way to release.

Under Pressure

Even if the Government came to realize on its own, through a process of screening or otherwise, that the original list of persons taken into custody was drawn indiscriminately and included innocents, the fact that release followed a negotiated settlement with the striking leaders could give no other impression than that it acted on both occasions under pressure and not on its own judgement.

It is not only the police or the rest of the administration but the Government as a whole lost its prestige and credibility by the way the riot of January 13 and the post-riot situation handled. For the administration could have revived its moral grip over the situation more easily if it had received proper direction and support from its political bosses. Moreover, political part of the challenge of communalism cannot be met by the law and order authorities alone.

The ruling alliance has some inherent limitations in meeting the challenge of the situation. The Chief Minister has virtually wound up his party in Jammu, considering the region as a political field to its coalition partner, the Congress. As the Congress has to play a second fiddle to a Kashmiri leader with a light weight representation in the cabinet and has given up its promise to the custodian of the regional interest of Jammu, it has lost its *raison d'être* in the region. Its support to the ill-fated decision

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Amritsar: A Ghost Town

By Ludwina A. Joseph

The 50-minute flight from Delhi is accomplished without incident. The snow-capped peaks of the Pir Pinjal range serve as a welcome diversion from lurking apprehensions of a hijack or terrorist attack. The Beas River is crossed and the glories of the Green Revolution are spread out below. It seems that every square inch of land must be cultivated in Punjab. My neighbour, a tall and patrician Sikh lady who lived on a farm outside Amritsar, exclaimed at the sight and was inclined to be philosophical about the Punjab tangle: one should think of the present trouble as a purification, a catharsis, she said.

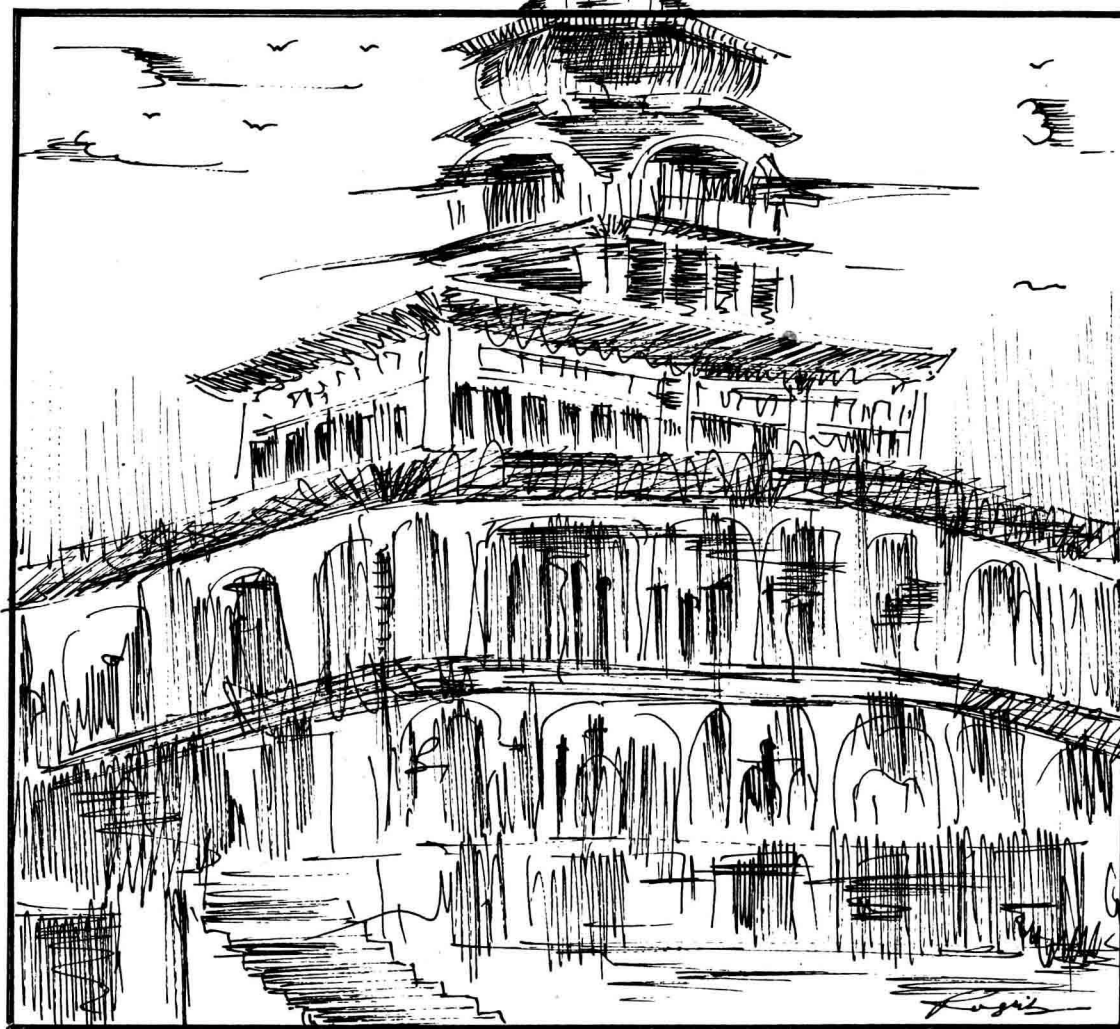
Amritsar, the holiest city of the Sikhs, was founded in 1577 by the fourth Sikh Guru Ram Dass, on land given by the Moghul Emperor Akbar. It has had a turbulent history, lying as it does in the path of every invader from the west. The Afghans destroyed it in 1761 and thereafter it was divided up into various Sikh principalities. In 1802 the Sikh leader Ranjit Singh captured it and gilded the roof of the great shrine, and hence it was called the Golden Temple.

"Amritsar: *sifti da ghar*" (Amritsar: abode of virtue) proclaims a sign on one of the city gates. In fact it would be more appropriate to call it a city of fear. Most frightened of all is the Hindu majority of its population over whom the terrorist threat looms. The militant stranglehold is suffocating Amritsar with businessmen migrating outside the state, daylight robbery in commercial centres, frequent killings, police helplessness and a scenario of both Sikhs and Hindus armed to the teeth and expecting the worst.

Once the nerve-centre of Punjab to which traders, businessmen, pilgrims and tourists alike thronged, Amritsar has now become a hotbed of extremist politics and intrigue and police brutality. Cinemas, hotels and restaurants have seen a drastic reduction in their business, as has the cloth market which after Ahmedabad used to be one of the biggest in the country.

In such an environment it is inevitable that a retaliatory Hindu militancy, in which criminal elements have infiltrated, is getting stronger every day and slogan-shouting, trident-wielding Hindu youths (whether Shiv Sena or Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh) are a common sight. These activists are also bitter that the Government is only concerned with healing the Sikh psyche in the wake of Operation Bluestar; what about the hurt Hindu psyche after the killing of hundreds of innocent Hindus, they wonder.

The city lives in fear and tension though, on the surface life appears to be normal, at least during the day. By sunset however, the streets are suddenly deserted, an



eerie silence prevails and the city bears the appearance of a ghost town.

Swarn Mandir: The Golden Temple

The Golden Temple has an ethereal beauty that is still magically untouched despite all the irreverence it has been sub-

The militant stranglehold is suffocating Amritsar with businessmen migrating outside the state, daylight robbery in commercial centres, frequent killings, police helplessness and a scenario of both Sikhs and Hindus armed to the teeth and expecting the worst

jected to in recent times. It is not just the design and architecture that impresses the visitor or the reflection of the marble walls and golden domes in the surrounding water, but more the sense of sacredness that is both awe-inspiring and reassuring and the effect of stillness pierced by the

stirring melody of the Gurbani (chanting from the scriptures).

The Temple is out of bounds after dark. Even during the day attendance is thin compared to previous years. Earlier, nearly four thousand people could be counted in the Temple at any given time. Although there may be fewer ordinary pilgrims now, the Nihangs (a Sikh sect) are sometimes present in large numbers. They wear long saffron shirts and kuchchas (drawers), blue turbans, long swords or kirpans, and appear to regard all non-Sikhs in a hostile fashion.

A Sikh history museum on the first floor of the main entrance of the Temple complex gives ample proof of the daring military and other exploits of the Sikhs. They bore the brunt of repeated persecution by some of the later and less-enlightened Moghul monarchs and had more than their share of bloodshed and violence, which is perhaps the reason for their close-knit fraternity and religious zeal. Recent history is also depicted. There is an evocative painting of the Akal Takht (seat of the supreme religious council of the Sikhs) in flames with the simple caption "6 June 1984" and photographs of "martyred" extremists including Bhindranwale, Bhai Amrik Singh and so on. Sant Longowal (of Punjab Accord fame) is conspicuously absent.

The "desecration" during Operation Bluestar of this most sacred of Sikh shrines is strongly evident. The path stormed by the Indian army tanks, the obvious repairs of

the marble pavement, the gaping shellholes and the most glaring reminder: the once-completely destroyed Akal Takht, now thankfully rebuilt. It is a miracle that the gold-canopied inner sanctum or Harmandir Sahib, in the center of the water and approached by a marble causeway which was in the direct line of fire between the approaching military tanks and the

The Punjab problem has fostered a perpetual state of siege that can be exploited by any Government at the centre. After all, a potentially separatist Punjab bogey is obviously a useful tool with which to frighten and unify a disenchanted electorate for, perhaps, many years to come

Akal Takht (headquarters of Bhindranwale and his men) escaped largely intact. A priest reading from the Guru Granth Sahib (scriptures) tells visitors in an aside about the extent of damages. The atmosphere is one of deep reverence. Pilgrims throw offerings into a sheet spread in the middle of the

floor and join in chanting prayers.

There are stories of army atrocities during Bluestar (of a baby's brains being dashed out, of women killed), and also of Bhindranwale's iniquities: (five hundred harem women in captivity, the holy tank filled with dollars, weapons, gold). The traumatic days of June 1984 are graphically revealed and there is a sense of a guilt and shame that so beautiful and holy a place could be so badly misused by both sides.

Punjab: Unending Catharsis

The Punjab crisis has been so long with us that it is almost impossible to be detached or completely objective about it. There are no guaranteed solutions no one, not even the most optimistic Indian, expects any longer that it will be rapidly settled. In fact it will probably deteriorate further within the vicious circle of Sikh terrorist attacks, increasing Hindu militancy and the twin threats of police excesses and revolt.

Four years ago the Punjab Accord between Rajiv Gandhi and the Akali moderates was unanimously acclaimed as an historic breakthrough, a prize feather in the youthful Prime Minister's cap and a culmination of the political prestige and goodwill he enjoyed at the time. Today, however, that euphoria seems incredible as that much-touted peace initiative turned out to be a monumental failure what with terrorist killings and massacres continuing unchecked, the terms of the Accord unimplemented and the goodwill of 1984-85 completely dissipated. Various other initiatives have been tried and have equally failed: the Barnala Government though popularly elected was woefully incoherent, a long spell of President's rule has not crushed the terrorist menace, fringe extremists and even a Jain muni (holy man) have been propped up temporarily and inexplicably as dubious mediators and then dropped, and now Benazir Bhutto's coming to power in Islamabad has not put an absolute end to alleged (according to New Delhi) Pakistani help to the militants. There appears to be a bankruptcy of available options with administrative rather than political actions being taken and fewer people believing any longer that the Government is either serious or capable of resolving the problem. It is appalling also that so little progress has been made in trying to settle outstanding issues.

It is also a cynical comment on our times that the Punjab problem has fostered a perpetual state of siege that can be exploited by any Government at the centre. After all, a potentially separatist Punjab bogey is obviously a useful tool with which to frighten and unify a disenchanted electorate for perhaps many years to come.

Efforts At Unity To Disunite Later

By K.S. Khosla

As was expected, the latest efforts of the Akali Dal leaders to unite, too, have failed like the previous ones. In fact, the Akali leaders are making a mockery of themselves by their repeated efforts and unity to disunite later. The main reason for their failure to unite is their lust for power. All of them are politicking and none of them is willing to make any sacrifice for the sake of the "Panth" which they claim to represent and defend. Little do they realise that in the process they are losing their constituency—the Sikh peasantry.

The latest effort at unity was made by Captain Amrinder Singh, former Maharaja of Patiala and former Agriculture Minister in the Akali Ministry. Captain Amrinder is a brother-in-law of Mr. Simranjit Singh Mann, a senior police official in detention in Bhagalpur jail. Captain Amrinder Singh announced at Ludhiana that three parties, namely, the Akali Dal (Barnala), the Akali Dal (Talwandi) and the Akali Dal (Mann) had decided to merge. He even obtained the signatures of Mr. Surjit Singh Barnala and Mr. Jagdev Singh Talwandi on the agreement and released copies of it to newsmen. According to the agreement Mr. Talwandi was to be President of the Akali Dal and Mr. Mann its Patron. It was further decided that Mr. Talwandi would hold organisational elections and give representation to the different factions in the working committee.

Hopes of unity were dashed the very next day when the Akali Dal (Mann) leaders and Baba Joginder Singh, father of Sant Jarnail Singh Bhinderanwale, announced that they were not a party to the agreement and would not accept Mr. Talwandi as President. This denial came despite Captain Amrinder Singh's claim that he had obtained prior approval of Mr. Mann to the agreement when he met him in jail in December last. The Akali Dal (Mann) presidium described Captain Amrinder Singh's announcement as "baseless" as there was no post of Patron. Mr. Charanjit Singh Walia, Secretary General of the party, even accused Captain Amrinder Singh of being a "compulsive liar" and that he had no authority to speak on behalf Mr. Mann. He also came down heavily on Mr. Talwandi alleging that his nominees in the Shiromani Gurdwara

Prabandhak Committee had been charged with corruption—a development in the religious wing concerning misappropriation of gurdwara funds which is further ruining the reputation of some of the Akali leaders. Some of the Mann presidium leaders even charged Captain Amrinder Singh with acting on the behest of the Central government, a familiar charge in Akali circles when they want to malign their rivals or opponents. The flaw in Captain Amrinder Singh's unity efforts was that he had not obtained the signatures of any Akali Dal (Mann) office bearer. The bizarre development in Akali circles is to obtain "approval" of Akali leaders in jail, namely, Mr. Parkash Singh Badal, Mr. G.S. Tohra and Mr. Mann, and start unity moves on their behalf.

The reaction of the Akali Dal (Mann) group can be understood in the absence of formal approval

from it. But the behaviour of Mr. Barnala is rather strange. He was away to Nagpur when the news of unity broke out. He parried newsmen's questions about unity at Nagpur airport but when on reaching Chandigarh he came to know that some Jalandhar newspapers had published copy of the agreement with his signatures appended to it, he said that he had signed the agreement in good faith. There was a virtual revolt in his party. Majority of the members felt hurt at not being consulted on such an important matter and said that they would not support the agreement. Later Mr. Barnala repudiated the agreement saying that since one party to it had backed out of it, it could not be implemented. For the sake of public consumption, he defended his action by saying that he signed the agreement as he did not want to be accused of putting obstacles in the way of unity.

The ways of Akali leaders are devious, to say the least. Mr. Barnala backed out of the agreement after signing it when his party workers revolted against him. Even his protégé, Mr. Tota Singh, whom he appointed acting President of the party, lamented that he was not consulted on the issue. The same dictatorial trend is visible in the attitude of Captain Amrinder Singh also. He told newsmen that since Mr. Mann had authorised him to work for Akali unity, he did not think it necessary to consult leaders of the Mann

group, some of whom charged him with being a government agent. If one goes by the accusation and counteraccusations of Akali leaders, it becomes difficult to understand which Akali leader is Panthic leader and which is government agent. At least one thing is clear: they do not consult their party workers or the Panth before taking important decisions and yet they accuse the Congress (I) of destroying inner party democracy. The Sikh peasantry, the main support of the Akali Dals, is suffering at the hands of the terrorists as well as the police. The Akali Dals have done precious little to mitigate the suffering of the people living in the border districts. They, however, give lectures to the peasantry to fight the terrorists with courage, while they themselves are ensconced in fortresses guarded by armed policemen provided by the government. Not one Akali leader has gone to the villages unescorted to face the terrorists. They are men of straw, as one old Akali worker put it.

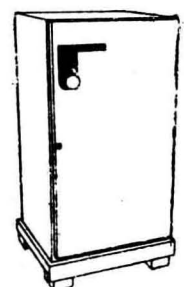
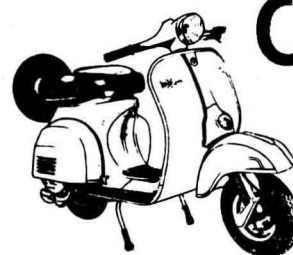
The only two Akali leaders who can bring about a semblance of unity—even that is doubtful in view of the situation having gone from bad to worse during their detention—are Mr. Parkash Singh Badal and Mr. G.S. Tohra. There is a remote hope that the government may release them. But will their release bring about unity in the Akali ranks at the present juncture? That is a million dollar question.

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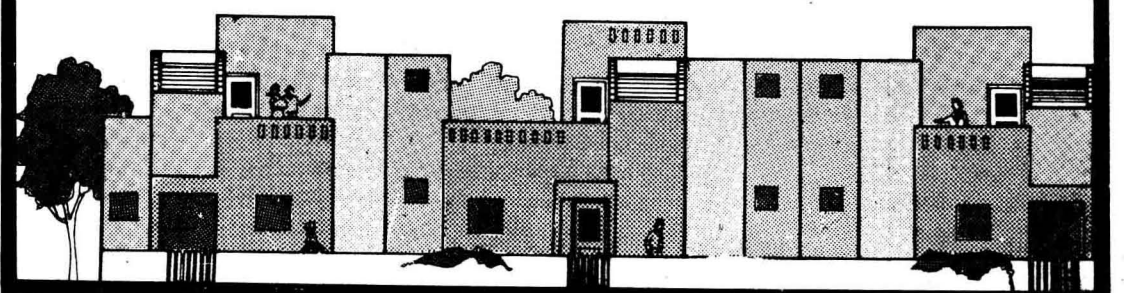
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Education and Women's Development

Half Of The World's Population Fighting For Justice

By V. Bhaskaran

The idea of equality of opportunity in education as one of the basic elements of human rights is theoretically widespread and widely accepted. In practice, however, many varied and complex obstacles still exist, preventing equality from becoming a reality. The one group which is yet to gain effective access to it is of the women who make half the population of the world.

Education is the key to the development of self awareness and that since girls are tomorrow's mothers, equal access for them to education is imperative and in keeping with Article 26 of the Declaration of Human Rights. Education can play a decisive part in making women aware of their aspirations, their real potentials and their rights, it is one of the most vital factors in the activities aimed at eliminating discrimination based on sex, and promoting women's full participation in political, economic and cultural life. Illiteracy is a major obstacle to development, but when it afflicts women, who are earliest educators of children, it is an even greater handicap affecting the future of younger generations.

Obstacles

Illiteracy still remains the major problem in India and women constitute a major portion of the illiterates. About 75 per cent of the approximately 600 million adult illiterates in India today are women. Although the proportion of illiterates in the total adult population had decreased, the absolute number of illiterates is on the increase.

The obstacles to achieving equal educational rights for women are many. Social, economic, cultural and political reasons are interwoven, which create patterns of attitudes unfavourable to the learning process of girls and women.

For girls, the beginning and end of education is connected with domestic tasks entrusted to them by the family and lack of interest shown by parents in their daughters' education in contrast with that shown in the educational progress of boys.

Daily shopping for all the family, looking after younger children and running the home are often the responsibility of girls aged 10 and

over, especially in economically disadvantaged households, where the tired and sick mothers entrust house work to their daughters. It is a tragedy that this tendency to make use of girls in the household is astonishingly acute, resulting in girls being made to leave school, regardless of their scholastic success or progress, under the pressure of agricultural and domestic work. It is also this pressure that

Functional literacy programme should be developed for girls and women who have left school or have never gone to school. Civic education must be imparted for all in order that girls should become aware of both their rights and duties and boys to respect girls and treat them as equals in every field

accounts for a far greater degree of absence from school among girls than among boys.

The early marriage of girls, particularly in rural areas, rapid succession of exhausting pregnancies along with financial imperatives are compulsions that force them to

stop learning. Early marriage is connected with customs and tradition. Many is for the mother herself to have the right kind of education.

Despite the significant advances made since independence including the establishment of a separate Ministry for Women, the equality of women in the full and comprehensive enjoyment of the right to education is far from achieved. It is true that with the development process, a section of the women has entered the mainstream but the majority still remain to a status subordinate to that of men. We cannot afford to leave the women behind when the country forges ahead.

There is as urgent need to take concerted efforts for the eradication of this evil through formal and informal education.

Some Suggestions

Functional literacy programme should be developed for girls and women who have left school or have never gone to school. Civic education must be imparted for all in order that girls should become aware of both their rights and duties and boys to respect girls and treat them as equals in every field.

To retain girl students in schools the curricula should be tailored to the needs of the students, keeping in mind their socio-economic environments. Teachers should be given the discretion to plan the curriculum in a flexible framework, e.g. to vary holidays so that in rural areas holidays fall during the harvesting season. A system of creches should be organised so that girls are in school and not at home as baby sitters. Government must encourage parents through aid and motivation to ensure enrolment in primary education. Supplies of food and drinking water, health and family welfare centres should be provided where necessary. Evening classes should be organised for parents and girls who cannot attend schools for various reasons.

Unequal Values

The roles traditionally assigned to men and women in our economy are unequal and different. Unequal because the social, economic and political role of men are upgraded to the disadvantage of women. This unequal value



system assigned to the social roles of adults has a powerful feedback effect on the education of children, whether boys or girls. Education, as a result, does not appear to have the same value for girls as for boys. It is not necessarily the man who discourages woman. It is the woman herself who discriminates between daughters and sons and believes herself to be inferior or vulnerable.

A woman needs to be viewed as a partner in bringing up children, the management of the household and in dealing with matters concerning family and the community. The tendency to place the entire burden of responsibility on women in the roles traditionally assigned to her merits correction. A woman can perform her role as a mother in the physical, moral and social well being of her children, once she is educated in child development, hygiene, nutrition, household management and social relationships. It is also largely dependent on the time and respite she gets from routine household chores and, above all on the understanding, support and assistance she receives from her husband and other members of her family.

The influence of mothers on the physical, mental and moral development of their children is undisputed. A child begins to know his

environment, learns his food habits, social manners, skills, values, attitudes, etc. from the mother.

The training and education of girls and women should be lifelong. From their childhood onwards, girls should know that they will always have the opportunity to resume their studies and to be trained, whatever be their age and family situation. For luring more and more girls to schools, certain concessions are necessary to help them find suitable employment. Relaxation of age, criteria to enable them to seek employment when they are free from child rearing responsibilities, suitable posting and transfer to avoid family dislocation, etc. are some possible steps.

Education alone cannot be expected to do everything to dispel social prejudices and stereotypes, as education itself is a reflection of the culture and ethos of a society. It is, therefore, desirable that widespread awareness and information campaigns, directed at the whole population, should accompany the efforts to provide schooling and training for girls and women as part of the process of democratising education. Much remains to be done in order to change mentalities, in order to put an end to the longstanding habit of domination of women by men.

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From the House of

SIMCO HAIR FIXER

Who Is Not Baffled?

By Randhir Chhatwal

For more than four years the name of the once prominently Princely State of Rajasthan—Jodhpur only reminded of the detainees, who were in prison thereafter the Operation Bluestar. With their departure—some to their homes—after withdrawal of the charge "Waging war against the State" and others to different jails in the country under fresh detention orders—one chapter in its history is over. But it has left behind sad memories of unbecoming behaviour, food with excessive chillis and stones and unusually harsh treatment by jail authorities.

Wheel Of Fate

The wheel appears to be turning now. Girilal Jain, at that time Editor of *The Times of India* and one of the vociferous supporter of Operation Bluestar action of Mrs. Indira Gandhi, now repents it. Recently, he was interviewed by Tavleen Singh for *Debonair*. In reply to a question on Bluestar—"In retrospect do you still think you were right?" Girilal Jain said, "No, in retrospect, I think, I was wrong. You see Indira Gandhi had messed up the situation. She had allowed the (Golden) Temple to be fortified, she had sat back doing nothing and there she used the wrongest possible instrument—the army. It is now clear that job could have been handled much more delicately and effectively". Whether as a repentance or otherwise it would surprise to read Girilal Jain's further remarks: "I was tempted to change my religion to Sikhism because I admired them so much. Khalsa is the highest expression of the Indian Genius." But many would recall his infamous editorial in *The Times of India* telling Sikhs to remember that others of their community in other parts of the country were vulnerable. Was it not to provoke anti-Sikh riots? And, now, M.V. Kamath is taking over where Jain left. Recently in *The Indian Post* (6 March) was telling Muslims in India "to end their passivity and engender love for India in the hearts of Kashmiri Muslims or face 'serious repercussions' in other parts of the country." We are banning books on similar grounds, but why no action against such articles? Why newspapers do not black list such columnists?

Baffling Point

Punjab has been in turmoil for about a decade and is problem one before the country. "It will figure in the next election", believes Rajinder Sareen, *The Tribune*, 13 March. Shri M.J. Akbar says "In the meantime, could we please remove 'solution'

from the political dictionary of Punjab?" And "What is there to solve", asks *The Tribune* (of 13 March). *The Hindu* editorially calls the Sikh grievances—"mostly imaginary". Such a wide disparity amongst the mediamen on Punjab particularly those considered close to the seat of Power is best summed up in words of Girilal Jain "(I admit) I am baffled. But I do not know anyone who is not baffled."

Crisis Of Confidence

A serious crisis of confidence grips this problem. While Girilal Jain says "there was a widespread sense of betrayal. Many Hindus felt that there was nothing 'they' had denied the Sikhs"—This is to explain lack of heart searching that should have followed the November 1984. MN Buch

Killings of innocent persons, women and children have destroyed the basic good quality of the Sikhs for which they were known. There is no justification for violence. We still have to work hard and re-read and follow the scriptures to bring back the glory of the Khalsa

observes that "the great resentment amongst the Sikhs that those who precipitated or participated in the riots... have remained unpunished". The question is "we" and "they". The two should be equal partners. Delai Lama's remark on Tibet's recent upsurge are quite applicable here—"May be it is better we remain with the Chinese—but only if we are genuinely equal." The emphasis is on "genuinely equal"—let the people of the country do the heart

searching—"They" may not deny anything but question is of participation as equal partners in framing the future destiny of the country and enjoying the fruits and sharing the sorrows. The list of such differentiation stretches from humiliation of Sikhs in Haryana in 1982, Operation Bluestar, November 1984 killings followed by killing at Hissar, Rishikesh, Bidar and now Jammu and is still continuing. Has any killer been apprehended? Mere assurance that there will be no soft peddling is not convincing.

Present Situation In Punjab

"No one in Punjab sympathises with terrorists. Now leave it to the Punjabis to resolve their own problems", says Khushwant Singh in *The Telegraph* (13 March). Another writer, Shush Kochar, shares the same views—"The government should allow the Punjabis to decide what they really want"—but *The Times of India* editorial (3 March) says, "State may have to remain under President's rule till such time as the back bone of the terrorists is not smashed"—What will signify that it has been smashed or not yet? Similar as the views of the other government supporter *The Telegraph* (5 March): "There should be no question of lifting President's rule in Punjab for the moment." But what is the present situation in Punjab? Is it what *The Tribune* (14 March) feels? "Prevailing mood amongst Sikh masses which is decisively against terrorism and equally determined in favour of peace and amity" compared to lawlessness, the government apathy and unconcern towards the security of life and property of the people. MN Buch under "The real Problem" (*Indian Express* 15 March) says that "there is virtually no remedy that the District Magistrate can offer a villager who has been humiliated, beaten or worse". "His (Chaman Lal) ouster from Punjab is a national tragedy."

Where Have We Reached?

The level of insecurity in Punjab is best summed up by Nirmal Kaur—a widow mother of Ajmer Singh—Jodhpur detenus released on 6 March—"She will not allow her son, Ajmer Singh, to go to the (Golden) Temple during any religious festivities." Obviously such festival occasions are now for mournings. Killings of innocent persons, women and children have destroyed the basic good quality of the Sikhs for which we were known. There is no justification for violence. We will have to work hard and re-read and follow the scriptures to bring back the glory to the Khalsa.

Danger Signals From Jammu

Continued from page 3

of the Government to curtail the number of offices for the annual move to Jammu last year had further damaged its credibility in the region. On top of it, the organisational structure, and political work of the party has remained suspended since the exit of the then party chief Mufti Muhammad Syed more than a year and a half ago.

Political Vacuum

The massive unprecedented political vacuum has yet not been filled by any secular party; the reasons of which need not be gone into here. The communal trouble assumed the form that it did because no organised political party—in the government or the opposition—offered any resistance.

What Jammu witnessed on the black Friday of January 13 was not merely a fit of madness by a section of its population or failure of a wing of its administration but a wider systemic collapse. There is no doubt that non-party citizens, intellectuals and students rose to the occasion and with the spontaneous cooperation of both the communities restored order and peace. But without repairing the system, political and administrative, voluntary efforts would be hard pressed to fill in the entire vacuum.

A good party, a good leader and a good administrator does make a difference in a situation. But weaknesses of the system can make their task difficult, if not impossible in certain situations. The present unitary set up of Jammu and Kashmir state has, for instance, inbuilt provision for communal tensions. By denying

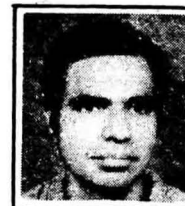
regional identities, which are the most potent cementing force among diverse communities, it drives people into communal alignments.

Though the principle of regional autonomy was conceded by Nehru and Abdullah as far back as in 1952 and endorsed by national leaders like Jayaprakash Narayan and Shyamaprasad Mukherjee and reiterated by every Chief Minister of the state, before assuming office and after leaving it, the principle has yet not been implemented adding to the frustrations of the people.

For a variety of reasons, normal democratic outlets for these frustrations have been denied to the people of the state which are then forced to seek secessionist or communal outlets. It then is used as an added reason for denial of democratic rights.

Communal trouble in Jammu was thus a product of a vicious circle in which lapses a section of citizens, administrators, politicians and the system reinforced one another. However, weakness of the system is not alibi for abdication of its responsibility by the political leadership—in power or in opposition—non-performance of politicians is no alibi for collapse of the administration, administrative incompetence no alibi for communal madness. While such alibis in the reverse order would not be justified, sanity and alertness shown by the citizens of Jammu during the worst ever communal riot in the town might be the starting point to strengthen and improve the entire chain.

PUCL Award To Bharat Dogra



It is gratifying to find that Bharat Dogra's pioneering and immensely useful work has been recognised at last.

Over the years he has travelled extensively and to inaccessible parts of the country and brought to public attention the sufferings of people who are denied their rights.

The manner in which he has depicted the sufferings of the mining labourers of Dehradun, the evictees from the forests of Tehri Garhwal, the poverty of Kalahandi and artisans of Saharanpur and the sufferings of the tribals in Rajasthan are too well known to bear repetition. In fact, his canvas is much wider. He has also written extensively about the communal violence in Gujarat and development projects being executed in different parts of the country at the cost of the poor and the underprivileged.

It was in the fitness of things, therefore, that the People's Union for Civil Liberties conferred on him the 1988 Award for the journalism of human rights. He is committed to the cause of democratic rights and concern for environment. This paper has had the privilege of featuring him regularly. THE FORUM GAZETTE salutes him on this honour conferred on him and look forward to many more years of active and fruitful collaboration with him.

SEMINAR ON AN AGENDA

Punjab continues to remain a festering sore in our body politic. Many observers, analysts and scholars have analysed the issues involved objectively and subjectively. The responsibilities for the present situation shall continue to be debated for decades. But one thing is certain that during the last half decade or so the worst blow to nation-building has been inflicted by dithering and opportunism of leadership at various levels.

Even today there is a tendency to underrate politics. There is a tendency to glorify the role of one police or administrative official. Of course these officials have an important part to play as far as the day-to-day operational tasks are concerned. But the basic policy is important. And this must be determined by a political approach. The managerial tools are a means to an end and not an end by themselves. May be the godly people wait for God to show them light because politicians

the linguistic controversy engineered by communal elements, rural-urban dichotomy, consequences of the process of Green Revolution, little scope for the investment of the surplus and political opportunism of the Central and State leaders of major political parties had created a critical situation in Punjab. Within the frame-work of these factors one has to try to find structural perception of the state of confidence in the Indian democracy.

In his inaugural address Prof. Rajni Kothari insisted that the dignity, autonomy, and identity of Punjab in the national set up be restored. He added that the process of self-transformation which Punjab had entered upon in the sixties must be rejuvenated. Punjab should not be treated as an occupied territory. The loss of security at the hands of terrorists on the one hand and arbitrary executive on the other must be corrected by widespread security for the common man. The wound

The dignity, autonomy, and identity of Punjab in the national set up be restored. The process of self-transformation which Punjab had entered upon in the sixties must be rejuvenated. Punjab should not be treated as an occupied territory. The loss of security at the hands of terrorists on the one hand and arbitrary executive on the other must be corrected by widespread security for the common man. The wound inflicted by the follies of a decade of bunglings must be dressed and healed.

- Prof. Rajni Kothari

admitted the necessity of punishment to the killers of 1984 but expressed lack of faith in any method of doing the same.

Prof. Manoranjan Mohanty, presiding over the fore-noon session emphasised that Punjab call for the attention of entire India. The long-standing grievances of Punjab must be redressed, democracy must be restored and the scars caused by foolish

By G.S. S

machinations of politicians must be attended to. Towards all these goals there is only one way i.e. a powerful democratic movement in Punjab as well as in India.

Prof. P.L. Anand recounted the sacrifices of the Sikhs towards the independence of India and for the consolidation of freedom and self-sufficiency of Independent India. He wondered why leaders like Prakash Singh Badal and Simranjit Singh Mann continue to be incarcerated. He also suggested



Dr A.S. Narang



Prof Rajni Kothari



Mr Rajinder Sareen



Lt. Gn. J.S. Aurora (retd.)



Prof P

have let them down very badly. But the fact remains that only secular democratic politics can be a long term antidote to communal postures adopted for short term gains.

In this context, it is time for the people to intervene effectively. For this, first of all is required a consensus agenda that can be addressed to all concerned. As a first step for formulating such an agenda that can help Indian democracy regain its own health and confidence a Seminar was held at Delhi University on 18 March 1989. More than 70 concerned citizens-academics from Delhi and Jawaharlal Nehru Universities, journalists, Civil Liberties activists and intellectuals of different shades of opinions participated in the Seminar.

Introducing the seminar convenor, Dr. A.S. Narang, said that

inflicted by the follies of a decade of bunglings must be dressed and healed.

Dr. Amrik Singh in his presidential remarks said that good part of Punjab problem will be taken care of if people's confidence in the bonafides of the present regime and its sincerity to solve the problem could be secured. But, he rued, the present regime has lost all credibility in this regard and to regain it is a stupendous task.

Lt. General J.S. Aurora (Retd.) addressed all the sane elements on the Indian scene and urged upon them the necessity to take steps to usher in an era of communal harmony, national solidarity, and working for prosperity of the country. The repressive policies in the Punjab have been proven to be counter-productive. The population is caught between two rival formations inflicting terror upon people alternately by night

and day. The people of Punjab are totally alienated and disenchanted with the government policies. In order to enlist the popular support for the opposition to terrorist their confidence in the fairplay of the democratic side must be retrieved by solid and immediate steps. The March 3rd "package" is only tinkering about the problem. It must be followed by more meaningful

steps.

Sh. Rajinder Sareen, a senior Punjab analyst, congratulated the people of Punjab for maintaining communal amity inspite the worst kind of provocations by the terrorists and other hooligans masquerading as public-men. He was particularly appreciative of B.J.P. formation for intelligent and sober response to such provocations. He

that only restoration of democracy in Punjab will pave the way for national solidarity and prosperity.

Dr. Ashwani Ray regretted the foolish doings of gangsters and their patrons who have deepened communal division in Punjab. He condemned the black laws which have cast their shadow now here and now there in Independent India. Without freedom there can



FOR PUNJAB: A REPORT

be no self-transformation. The minimum that is expected of a government worth of its name is the protection of democratic rights of the people. But here we have a regime which prided upon its eagerness to trample upon the rights of the people. The democratic rights of the people must be restored. All issues underlying the agitation of the 1980s must be negotiated with an open mind and

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wound must be dressed.

Shri Raj Gill spoke for Punjabi enterprise and farming-skills. He suggested that Punjab farmers should be drawn into other states to generate a demonstration effect towards the modernization of agriculture and towards a life-style which is vibrant, secular and patriotic.

Dr. Rudra Dutt expressed his anger at the wanton destruction of life and social solidarity in Punjab. He insisted that only

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- Dr A.S. Narang

same should be used for consolidation of democratic movements.

There was a general consensus in the seminar that while looking for solution to Punjab crisis certain facts had to be kept in mind. The first is that the issues and problems of Punjab politics only reflect in sharper focus, the general trend of politics in the country as a whole.

Related to this the second fact is to realise that no solution can be worked out for the Punjab crisis if it continues to be perceived, projected or manipulated as a communal problem. Third factor to remember is the inseparability of democracy and rationality. Democracy inspite of its aberrations and apparent irrationalities has the potential of throwing up lasting solutions to its internal problems.

The fourth fact in this context is the irrelevance of military solution to the crisis in hands. Not only Punjab is on a highly sensitive

ous steps without delay. The seminar deemed the following steps contributory to the recovery of democracy and normalcy in Punjab necessary:-

1. Cessation of violence and suppression by terrorist gun-wielders and security forces is a must for any progress towards restoration of democracy in Punjab. The minimum step towards that is a simultaneous declaration by both the sides for suspension of violence. If government takes initiative in this the terrorists are likely to reciprocate.

2. Call an open, continuous, national round-table conference on Punjab with a retired Supreme Court judge in the chair. All parties, States and organizations will register their views on issues like autonomy, territory, river-waters and other grievances. The Parliament may legislate the consensus emerging from this round-table into the law of land.

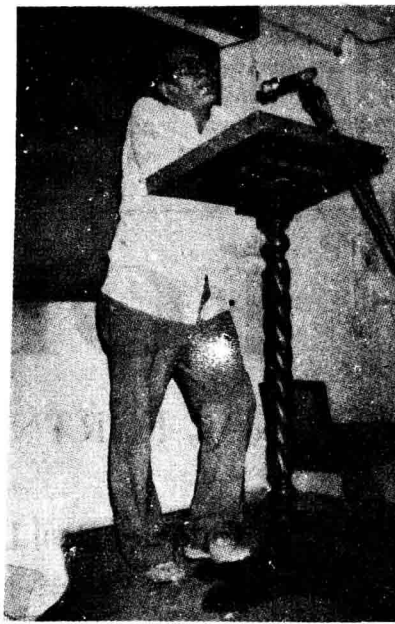
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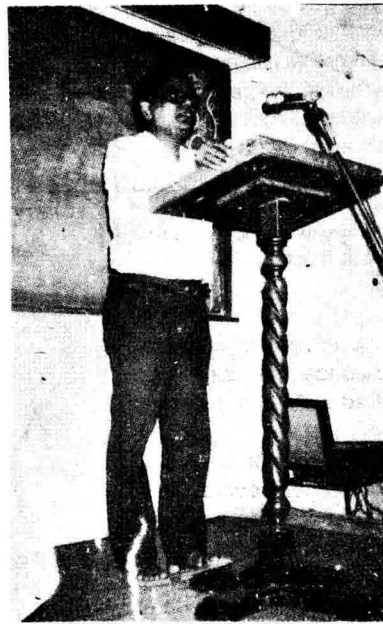
Anand



Mr R.C. Vermani



Dr. Rudra Dutt



Prof Manoranjan Mohant



Prof G.S. Sandhu

democratic reconstruction can feel the wounds caused by the stratagems of cunning politicians and opportunistic power-grabbers.

Dr. Parmanand suggested that there should be sufficient dialogues and discussions between all concerned and all grievances should be allowed to surface. No one should stand on prestige. He

also suggested that the Sikhs in Punjab and other parts of India should not be allowed to be alienated.

Prof. K.K. Panda pointed out that the only contemporary solution has to be a political one. The Ribeiro syndrome, used as a legitimate substitute to a political crisis, breeds only an anti-state psyche, he suggested. Prof.

Panda pointed out that what is required now, notwithstanding Mr. Rajiv Gandhi's package, is a series of steps to restore the confidence of the people.

Dr. R.B. Jain presiding over the afternoon session stressed the need for political solution. He expressed his satisfaction over the communal harmony present in Punjab and suggested that the

border and a prolonged military involvement may cease to be an entirely Indian affair but also deployment of army in Punjab for long will inevitably lead to the army take over of the government. The forces which will conduct long drawn operations against their people will at some stage refuse to pull the politicians' chestnuts out of fire. Whenever civilian politicians create impossible imbroglios because of their doings men in the green take over very soon. The cases of Pakistan, Bangladesh, Burma and Indonesia are sufficient to support this proposition.

Proceeding from these premises the Seminar discussed the issues involved individually and arrived at the consensus that the March 3rd Punjab package though a welcome beginning cannot bring fruit in isolation. It must be followed by more vigor-

Punjab her identity, dignity, security and self-transformation process. Restore self-government in Punjab without further delay and back up democratic process in Punjab with fairplay.

4. The guilty men of November 1984 genocide and proven killers in Punjab and elsewhere must be punished. Those detained without guilt or serious charges including political leaders must be released.

5. Lastly democratic institutions in Punjab and the country as a whole must be strengthened and processes for removal of inequalities, regional and sectoral imbalances must be started without further delay.

The seminar proposed that the above agenda can be discussed and debated at various levels and attempts be made to create a national consensus.



Why Is Most Part Of The Report Withheld?

The government had held back most part of the Thakkar Commission Report on Indira Gandhi's assassination and thus most of the vital truths are still kept away from the public.

To the people of this country nothing is more interest-generating than the arrest and punishing of the killers of their former prime minister. So the government cannot hold back the pages of the Report that it did not table in the Parliament on March 27.

The Opposition leaders have pointed out that when a report is tabled in the Parliament, all papers connected with it are also placed. The report as tabled consists of two parts, the interim report (343 typewritten pages) and the final report (314 pages) including the appendices and annexures.

In his interim report, however, Mr Justice Thakkar refers to a far more voluminous document. On page 7 of the interim report, Section 1.8.3 reads: "The Commission's report is in four volumes. Volume I comprises five chapters mentioned above. Volume II and III contains the papers pertaining to

show cause notices issued to individuals, their responses and the proceedings of the commission in relation thereto. Each volume comprises nearly 2000 pages. Volume IV contains interrogatories issued to various persons individually and their respective responses, as also inquiries by way of references made from a number of individuals and their responses. All the volumes carry their own index. (A footnote here says that the volumes will be remitted along with the final report). Papers pertaining to matters covered by the two terms of references which are not dealt with in this report will be included in separate volume along with the report on the remaining matters."

As against the 8000 pages which had been mentioned by the Justice himself, what was placed on the Table of the House were only 657 pages in two volumes. Where did go the remaining 7343 pages? No rhetoric will answer this question. The government is liable to answer this question and it seems that there will be no escape from the wrath of the people who are really worried about the loss of Mrs Gandhi's life.

An Anti-Climax

Continued from page 1

that category or not is an issue about which one cannot say anything for definite.

Out of Habit

Why did the government not release the report earlier? Out of habit more or less; that is all that one can say. Operating in secrecy seems to have become the established norm. Nobody therefore applied his mind to the issue. Once the issue erupted in the Parliament, non-partisan judgement became difficult. Because the opposition has demanded it, therefore the government decided to withhold it. It was only after pressures started building up that a cool and objective view of the situation was taken. The Prime Minister seems to have come to the conclusion that there was more to be gained by making it public than by withholding it. Subsequent developments have vindicated that judgement.

The moral to be drawn from this avoidable controversy is simple. The government must re-examine its own mode of working and the unnecessary secrecy in which it likes to look its operations. There was perhaps some justification for having withheld the report for some time though one can, equally plausibly, argue against it.

But there was no justification whatsoever once the case had been decided and two persons hanged.

The hanging of Kehar Singh still continues to bother people. This particular report does not seem to have thrown any new light on his role in the assassination. To that extent, the situation remains what it was at the time he was hanged. But the fact that he was hanged on the basis of dubious evidence still stares everyone in the face.

A man is hanged when the evidence against him is conclusive. In Kehar Singh's case, it was not so. A large number of people who do not have a partisan approach to the problem are of this definite opinion. To have hanged him in these circumstances suggests that it was not to punish the guilty but some other considerations which tilted the decision against him. To describe his hanging therefore as a judicial murder is perfectly in order.

And finally what about the killing of Beant Singh? To say that this was, technically speaking, not a part of the terms of reference, may be correct. But was not his killing a part of the conspiracy such as it was? The question is worth asking. Not to have dealt with this aspect of the problem is an act of omission.

'Act'ed To Slay Freedom Of Religion

Continued from page 1

wara faces charges of harbouring a terrorist. It will be an Herculean task to find out the history of every person who takes part in a *langer* like function inside a gurdwara. The new law hangs just as a Damocles' sword over every gurdwara Manager. No person who owns respect in the society will dare accept such a responsible position in the management of a gurdwara as his position will be most dangerous and he is sure to be brutalized and harassed by the police at any time.

The President agreed that he would forward the memorandum to the Home Ministry with his remarks so that action could be taken on it. But until now no action, it seems, has been taken by the government and it is learnt that the memorandum is in the cold storage of the Home Ministry.

The text of the memorandum and the text of the Act are given below:

Text of the memorandum

"In terms of this Memorandum, the Confederation of South Delhi Singh Sabha Gurdwaras seek to draw your attention towards the tremendous resentment being generated (Prevention

of misuse) Bill, 1988 which has already been passed by the Lok Sabha. If the strong feelings being expressed by the Sikhs in general against the aforesaid Bill, is any indicator, we have no doubt in our minds that the said Bill is going to aggravate the situation further and may be a handle to give rise to yet another agitation by already estranged Sikh Community.

"You will kindly agree that the Sikhs are equal citizens of this country for the independence of which they have contributed a lion's share which cannot be forgotten by the grateful Nation. That being so the Sikhs are fully entitled to the rights and privileges bestowed by the Constitution of India to every citizen. Your excellency being custodian of the Indian Constitution have a very heavy duty on your shoulders to see and ensure that no citizen much less any community as a whole is discriminated against. A heavy duty also devolves upon your excellency to uphold the sacred principle of secularism as enshrined in the constitution of India, and to ensure that the Government does not acquire a licence to interfere in the religious affairs of any community, particularly in respect of minority communities.

"We are one with the Government and will lend our unflinching support to the measures being adopted by the Government to eradicate the evils of terrorism and secessionism. We are willing and prepared to help the Government to bring about peace and normalcy in the strife ridden state of Punjab. We condemn violent activities in the strongest terms whether the terrorism is by individual or by the State. We will not hesitate to say that the State terrorism and repression let loose by the State deserves much more condemnation because the State terrorism particularly when it is against its own citizens, is indefensible and will certainly not solve any problem but will complicate the issues and aggravate the situation. The vicious circle has to be broken and earlier the better. We are of the firm opinion that the initiative has to come from the Government for which absolute honesty and sincere desire to solve the problem are the pre-requisites.

"Your excellency will kindly appreciate that the Sikh community has been on the receiving end for the last about 6 years and the Sikhs have suffered tremendous losses, political, social, economic

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Religious Institutions Act, 1988

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cal as also psychological. The Government has been passing laws after laws to contain terrorism for the last so many years, but has sadly failed till date. In spite of the fact that very harsh enactments have been adopted which openly and nakedly violate the legal jurisprudence and international law and could easily be called the blackest laws. The Government has till date failed to eradicate the evil of terrorism. What is the reason? There can be no two opinions in this regard. The diagnosis is incorrect and as such the treatment will not be efficacious.

"Your excellency being extremely wise, most experienced and highly respected leader of the country may like to advise the Government to feel the pulse of the people and change the tactics if really the Government is interested in bringing about peace in Punjab and keeping the integrity and solidarity of the country intact.

The latest in the series of the harsh measures taken by the Government in regard to Punjab generally and Sikhs particularly, is the passing of Religious Institution (Prevention of misuse) Bill, 1988, by the Lok Sabha. Ostensibly this Bill seeks to prevent the misuse of religious places. If this is the real aim, we have absolutely no objection rather we will say the aims and objects are praise-worthy. But the aforesaid object is only skin deep when we examine the provisions of the Bill a little carefully and deeply, it does not leave any scope of doubt that the real intention of the Government is to separate religion from politics by legislation. The said intention of the Government runs counter to the basic principles of Sikh faith and we will, without any exaggeration say that the said bill strikes at the very foundation of Sikh Dharma. Take for example the institution of "Sarbat Khalsa" and "Sangat" which is the Sikh Congregation of various Sikh sects of the entire world to take decisions on political, religious and social matters pertaining to Sikh Community. "Sarbat Khalsa" is invariably held at Akal Takht or other historical Gurdwaras but the aforesaid bill will make the holding of Sarbat Khalsa a punishable offence.

"Your excellency is not only a highly learned personality but has also varied experience and deep knowledge of various religions in the country. We have, therefore, no doubt in our minds that your excellency is very well aware of the Sikh history and the noble principles on which the Sikh faith is based. Without going much in detailed historical background, it would suffice to say that if religion is completely divorced from politics in Sikh faith, what is left could be anything but the Sikh

religion.

"As you are aware, in India every activity of the life starts with prayers, and this is more so in case of Sikh religion. For a Sikh, Ardas (prayer) has a special significance and importance. A Gur Sikh will not initiate any action/activity, be it a political, social, economical or domestic, unless he performs Ardas before Guru Granth Sahib so much so that he will not step out of his residence unless he performs Ardas. In short every activity small or big has to commence with an Ardas. This is the essence of Sikhism. In other words every action of a Sikh is connected in one way or the other, with his religion. We are at a loss to understand as to how the Sikhs will be able to reconcile with the aforesaid bill without saying goodbye to the basic principles of their faith and without violating the dictates of their Gurus.

"We, as the representatives of the educated and enlightened Sikh Community of Delhi are anxious to avoid any conflict between the dictates of our Gurus and dictates of the Parliament. Although both are binding upon us, yet where there is a conflict between the two, a Sikh who is deeply religious, will not be able to ignore the dictates of their Gurus and principles of their faith come what may. In the process the dictates of Parliament may have to be ignored which will be most unfortunate. The result will be observed more in its breach rather than compliance. Even otherwise we are told that it is in the interest of the Legislature not to pass a law which is not capable of being observed because such an enactment will generate a tendency of violation of laws.

"Coming to various provisions of the Religious Institution (Prevention of misuse) Bill 1988 we respectfully submit that the terms of "political activity", "Manager", "harbouring", etc. have very wide and deep connotations. Sikh Institutions and Gurdwaras are open for 24 hours for every one irrespective of his faith, caste and creed. Accordingly, every one who comes to the Sikh Gurdwaras is entitled to shelter as well as free food at langar. No one has a right of power to prevent the entry of the pilgrims inside the Gurdwaras or to refuse his partaking in langar.

"Your honour will kindly appreciate as to what are the means with the "Manager" of the Gurdwaras to screen the pilgrims about their antecedents and refuse them entry. Without any means to check the antecedents of the pilgrims coming from far and wide places, he is always exposed to risk of being hauled up by the police just on the ground that a person wanted by the police in some case was provided with food and shelter. In historical Gurdwaras, pilgrims visit in hundreds

and thousands particularly on Gurdwaras and other religious functions and partake in langar. The implications of the said bill are therefore, simply unthinkable. No respectable and peace loving individual, or a body of individuals, would willingly accept the office of a "Manager" without thereby risking his peace and reputation.

"Similarly implications of the "political activity" is so wide that it will perhaps prohibit any political activity on the part of the Sikh community altogether. According to the dictates of Sikh Gurus which are the basic Tenets of Sikhism, the highest authority wielding temporal and spiritual powers is "Shri Akal Takht". Who has powers to direct the highest temporal seat of the Sikhs to give up temporal authority and retain only spiritual one? That is why we are compelled to draw your attention why towards the fact that the said bill if passed will strike a fatal blow to the Institution of Shri Akal Takht and will thus create a perpetual rift between Sikhs and the Government, which is to be avoided at all costs, if we have to keep our country united.

"Your excellency will kindly appreciate that Government cannot be allowed to injure the sentiments of the entire Sikh community and deny them the right of practising their religion with a view to keep some unwanted persons out of Gurdwaras. The said object can be achieved by other means but certainly not by legislation.

"Your Government does not seem to have learnt any lesson from the past experience. In order to liquidate a few persons, the Government thoughtlessly and foolishly resorted to Operation Blue Star and injured the hearts of the entire Sikh community with horrible consequences. Similarly the Government is repeating its mistake nay folly of creating a permanent rift between the Sikh Community as a whole, qua the Government in order to keep a handful terrorists out of the Sikh shrines. This is like killing the patient rather than curing the ailment.

"Your excellency being head of the State, as already stated, has a very heavy responsibility to perform at this critical juncture. You have to see that Sikh faith is not attacked by legislation; which will result in permanent alienation of the Sikh Community, the possibility which is fraught with horrible consequences. Your excellency has to further ensure and advise your Government to take other measures to eradicate the evil of terrorism rather than attacking the basic principles of Sikhism by passing the aforesaid Bill.

"Your excellency will be doing a great service to the country by using your good offices and stopping the passage of this dubious and objectionable Bill which has serious implications and grave risk to the integrity and solidarity of the country, which is so dear to all of us."

Text Of Ordinance On Religious Institutions

The following is the text of the Religious institutions (Prevention of Misuse) Ordinance, 1988, promulgated by the President on 26th May, 1988.

An Ordinance to prevent the misuse of religious institutions for political and other purposes.

Whereas Parliament is not in session and the President is satisfied that circumstances exist which render it necessary for him to take immediate action:

Now, Therefore, in exercise of the powers conferred by Clause (i) of Article 123 of the Constitution, the President is pleased to promulgate the following Ordinance.

1. This Ordinance may be called the Religious Institutions (Prevention of Misuse) Ordinance, 1988.
(2) It extends to the whole of India except the State of Jammu and Kashmir.

(3) It shall come into force at once.

2. In this Ordinance, unless the context otherwise requires;

(a) "ammunition" shall have the same meaning as in clause (b) of sub-section (1) of Section 2 of the Arms Act, 1959.

(b) "arms" shall have the same meaning as in clause (c) of sub-section (1) of Section 2 of the Arms Act, 1959.

(c) "manager, in relation to a religious institution, means every persons, including any religious functionary (by whatever name called), who, for the time being, either alone or in association with other persons, administrators, managers or otherwise controls the affairs of that institution, its functions or properties;

(d) "political activity", includes any activity promoting or propagating the aims or objects of a political party or any cause, issue or question of a political nature by organising meetings, demonstrations processions, collection or disbursement of funds, or by the issue of directions or decrees, or by any other means, and includes such activity by or on behalf of a person seeking election as a candidate for any election to Parliament, any State Legislature or any local authority;

(e) "Political party" means an association or body of persons.

(i) which is, or is deemed to be, registered with the Election Commission of India as a political party under the Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968, as in force for the time being; or

(ii) which has set up candidates for election to any legislature, but is not registered or deemed to be registered under the Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968, or

(iii) Organised to carry on any

political activity, or to acquire or exercise political power through election or otherwise.

(f) "religious institution" means any place or premises used as a place of public religious worship, by whatever name or designation known.

3. No religious institution or manager thereof shall use or allow the use of any premises belonging to, or under the control of institution.

(a) for the promotion or propagation of any political activity, or

(b) for the harbouring of any person accused or convicted of an offence under any law for the time being in force, or

(c) for the storing of any arms or ammunition.

(d) for keeping any goods or articles in contravention of any law for the time being in force, or

(e) for erecting or putting up any construction or fortification, including basements, bunkers, towers or walls without a valid licence or permission under any law for the time being in force, or

(f) for the carrying on any unlawful or subversive act prohibited under any law for the time being in force or in contravention of any order made by any court, or

(g) for the doing of any act which promotes or attempts to promote disharmony or feelings of enmity, hatred or ill-will between different religious, racial, language or regional groups or castes or communities.

(h) for the carrying on of any activity prejudicial to the sovereignty, unity and integrity of India, or

(i) for the doing of any act in contravention of the provisions of the Prevention of Insult to National Honour Act, 1971.

Entry of Arms

4. No religious institution or manager thereof shall allow the entry of any arms or ammunition or of any person carrying any arms or ammunition into the religious institution.

Provided that nothing in this section shall apply to:

(a) the wearing and carrying of a Kirpan by any person professing the Sikh religion; or

(b) any arms which are used as part of any religious ceremony or ritual of the institution as established by custom or usage.

5. No religious institution or manager thereof shall use or allow to be used any funds or other properties belonging to the institution for the benefit of any political party or the purpose of any political activity or for the commission of any act which is punishable as an offence under any law.

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The Khalsa: A Unique Creation Of Guru Gobind Singh

By G.S. Chaddha

Dr. Gokal Chand Narang, an eminent Arya Samaj leader and historian of pre-partition days, has stated "The harvest which ripened in the time of Guru Gobind Singh was sown by Guru Nanak and watered by his successors. The sword which carved the Khalsa's way to glory was, undoubtedly forged by Gobind, but the steel had been provided by Nanak".

In the north-western part of India Baisakhi bring the wheat harvest. The farmers busy themselves in collecting the fruits of their labour during the previous six months. They are happy and jubilant. For the Sikhs, Baisakhi has its particular and special importance. On this very day Tenth Master had introduced the baptism of the double-edged sword (Khanda) and established the Order of the Khalsa. 'Khalsa' is the final product of Sikhism, jewel par excellence.

The Guru had sent special messages to his disciples to come for the festival. He pitched his tent. When he came out to address the audience, he had a sword in his hand and demanded a sacrifice. People had their misgivings and fears, some even doubted the sanity of the Guru. Ultimately, one person offered himself at the altar of devotion. The Guru took him inside the tent and people heard swish of the sword and a thud. He came out with a dropped sword out and demanded another sacrifice. Now, the people had no doubt that the Guru had actually killed the first person. Many started leaving. Still another person offered himself. The call was repeated five times, every time with the same result. After a while the five and the Guru came out, attired in new uniforms, to the surprise of every one. These five persons, belonging to different castes but merged in one were called 'Panj Piaras' (Five Beloveds). Thus starting with these Five beloveds the Guru created a formidable force that stood against the worst tyranny of the Mughal empire and the marauders like Ahmadshah Durani. The people who joined the Khalsa came from all the castes, the poor and the down-trodden. Those who had never dared to even touch a sword were able to face the Afghan hordes in the battle field with astonishing results. This is the real miracle that the Guru had produced. The resources at the command of the Guru were meagre but his was a just cause. He made the people understand that the power of spirit is unbeatable by any tyranny. An individual who joins the Khalsa fraternity vows to live an honest, chaste and productive life. He has to live and work in the world but still remain pure.

Out of the Five-beloveds (the Purified Ones) one was Khatri

(Daya Ram of Lahore, who became Daya Singh), Dharam Das (A jat of Delhi), Mokham Chand, a washerman of Dwarka, Saheb Chand a barber of Bidar and Himmat, a potter from Jagannath. The Guru had made them saint-soldiers, who always fought for the cause of justice. He had uttered "Guru Nanak found only devout disciple-Angad, to transmit his spirit into him, but I am lucky in having the Five beloved ones, who shall lay the foundation of the Khalsa (the Purified ones) by treading on the path of saints as well as soldiers. Since Nanak, it is the "Charanamrit" which is being administered to the devotees, but from now on, I shall baptize

In the north-western part of India Baisakhi brings the wheat harvest. The farmers busy themselves in collecting the fruits of their labour during the previous



tize them with water stirred with a dagger and change my Sikhs to Singhs (Lions), and with this transformation they shall obtain empire in this world and bliss hereafter".

These five were initiated as the first band of saint-soldiers after taking "Amrit". After administering Amrit to them the Guru himself begged from them his own initiation into the Order of the Khalsa. The memorable words of the Guru that "Khalsa is Guru and thea Guru is the Khals" amply prove in what high esteem the Guru held his followers. In the Bachter-Natak (Wonderous drama-Guru ji's autobiography) he had himself said "My wish was not at all to come away from Hemkunt mountains, where I was meditating and my mind was fastened on the feet of the Almighty, but He made known to me His desire. Thus spoke the Lord Almighty—

six months. They are happy and jubilant. For the Sikhs, Baisakhi has its particular and special importance. On this very the day Tenth Master had introduced the baptism of the double-edged sword and established the Order of the Khalsa. 'Khalsa' is the final product of Sikhism, jewel par excellence.

"I bless thee as My son, and appoint thee to extend religion, Go and spread my religion, and restrain the world from wayward ways".

Then again he said, "Whoever calls me the Supreme Being, shall suffer in hell,

Recognize me as God's servant only. Have no doubt whatever about this".

Again explaining the equality of mankind he said, "Recognize all mankind, whether Hindus or Muslims as one, the same Lord is the Creator and Nourisher of all, Recognize no distinctions among

nation, which followed the candid principles of liberty, equality and fraternity. Bulla Shah, a contemporary of Guru said, "In either say of the past; nor do I speak of the future; but I talk of the time of Guru Gobind Singh and declare openly "That but for him all the Hindus would have been converted to a foreign culture and religion."

The Guru had aroused a strong spirit of patriotism by raising strong protests against injustice, and cruelty and he had rejuvenated the social order ridding it of all kinds of inequalities. Whosoever, whether high or low, took the Amrit (Nectar) was filled with courage and zeal for sacrifice and considered himself equal to an army. This spirit of 'Amrit' enabled the Khalsa to be fearless who had determined to face bravely any kind of difficulties and render any kind of service for the protection of the down trodden, glory of the Khalsa and freedom of the country men from the yoke of the foreign rulers. Those who possessed jackalish tendencies were converted into brave spirited lions. The Guru had thus fulfilled his objective of life, which he had disclosed in "Bachitar Natak" as under:-

"For this purpose was I born, understand all ye pious people, To uphold righteousness, to protect those, worthy; and virtuous, To overcome and destroy all the evil doers".

Was this not a unique achievement which has no parallel in the world history? Another most admirable feature of his noble principles was that even during the battles there was no enemy and all wounded or victims irrespective of their caste or creed, were to be nursed equally. Bhai Kanhiya's example had proved this noble ideology. Bhai Kanhaiya was the chief organizer of the Red-cross organization of that time. All these virtues were imbibed by the Khalsa due to the spirit of pure service infused by the 'Amrit' (Nectar) of the Guru, who had enjoined upon all his disciples (Amritdharis) to follow such noble and high-spirited principles. It is an irony of fate that the Hill chiefs for whom Guru had sacrificed everything, felt jealous and stood against him and joined the enemy's forces to fight against the Khalsa army of the Guru.

It is really most unfortunate that instead of understanding the meaning of 'Amrit' and its uses in its right perspective the present ruler had started a repressive policy against the Amritdhari Khalsa, probably on the advice of politically motivated and biased advisors. This was not at all a just and correct approach and as such it proved to be counter-productive.

them, the monastery and mosque are the same, so are the Hindu worship, and the Muslim prayer, men are all one. "This shows that in the eyes of the Guru all human beings were equal and he had equal respect for all religions. He saw the same light manifest in all.

Because of ignorance some people carry misconceptions that the teachings of Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh showed two different stages in the development of Sikhism. This is a mistaken view, in as much both the Gurus had brought from Almighty an identical mission of launching a crusade against injustice, tyranny and repression perpetrated by the Mughal rulers on Hindus. Guru Gobind Singh was thus a staunch believer in democracy and secularism. He was a foremost emancipator of India. He had endeavoured to create a new

Sri Lankan Elections

Strong Democracy, Fragile Peace

Sri Lanka is among those South Asian States where the roots of democracy have been quite strong—to a very great extent like the democracies of the West. There are reasons for this. On the one hand, the history of colonialism in Sri Lanka is much older than India's, the history of democracy and participation is not less older than its giant northern neighbour, on the other. This is altogether a different story that this democracy got degenerated into a device to keep away a substantial and vocal segment of Sri Lankan society from the mainstream of the country's politics. This naturally resulted in the unending naked dance of ethnic clashes and violence.

If, however, despite this development, the island has succeeded in conducting elections nationally and electing a new President, too, one has to accept the success of democracy there as a fait accompli. Importantly, the participation at the polls has been substantial, even though it might have been lessened in comparison to the country's own standards, during the Presidential election of December 19 and Parliamentary election of February 15. The 9th Parliamentary election in Sri Lanka is important in the sense that it retained the same party in power in the country. Hitherto all general elections had seen the incumbent governments changed. Also, for the first time a parliamentary poll was held on the basis of proportional representation, rather than on the "first past the post" system as prevalent in many Western countries and India. Now it is obvious that the first past the post system would have given more serious drubbing to the Opposition. Voters' wishes were, thus, more truly reflected this time.

The credibility of any election depends on so many questions' answers. How many political parties participated therein? How many political parties boycotted it? What was the percentage of polling? What was the political environment in which the election was held? These are some of the questions.

Not only the ruling United National Party (UNP), but also its traditional rival, the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) contested this election. The Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF)—which represented the interests of the Tamils till August 1983 in the preceding Parliament and which had to quit Parliament as a result of the 6th Constitutional Amendment precluding any demand for separatism—also participated. Organizations like the Eelam Peo-

ple's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF), which gained power in the North—Eastern Sri Lankan Provincial Council, and the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization (TELO) contested under the umbrella of the TULF. The United Socialist Alliance (USA) and the Mahajana Eksth Peramuna (MEP) also contested the election. The Eelam Revolutionary Organization of Students (EROS), which has been apparently functioning in close collaboration with the Liberation Tigers of the Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and which had some influence in the Jaffna peninsula, also participated. The Muslim Congress was yet another party that participated.

Palpably, most of the political parties in the island state participated in the February 15 election, contributing to its credibility. Considering the politics of violence and boycott to be more effective, the LTTE did not participate. Likewise the Janatha Vimukti Peramuna (JVP), an organization of the Sinhalese militant nationalists, also did not participate in this poll. Interestingly, both the LTTE and the JVP are opposed to the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord of July 1987. Both the JVP and the LTTE called for boycott of these polls and threatened the candidates and voters with death. In the south, a number of candidates were killed and generally the JVP came to be criticised for this. Thanks to the efforts of the Indian Peace Keeping Force in the north and the east, peace prevailed there, but the LTTE indulged in many violent activities.

Fear psychosis, which was the outcome of violent activities of various militant and terrorist organizations, naturally hampered the process of campaigning. After the explosion of a number of bombs at a public meeting addressed by Mrs Sirimavo Bandaranaike some time before the election day, the fear psychosis became more pronounced. In the Tamil dominated areas, on the other hand, the TULF and others contesting under its umbrella, could not muster sufficient courage to campaign because of the fear of the LTTE. Thus more and more political parties and candidates took to posters and advertisements in various newspapers with a view to communicating their messages to the voters.

If in the milieu of violence and fear 63.5% voters of 93.3 million registered ones went to the polling booths to register their likes and dislikes, any suspicion about democracy in Sri Lanka must appear superficial. It is altogether a different matter that the island state has the history of 80-85% polling. But the existing circum-

By Dr Parmanand

stances were of immediate relevance. It is worth mentioning that more than 1,000 people were killed between the Presidential election and the Parliamentary poll.

Paradoxically, the 9th parliamentary polls in the island state were held during the presence of a foreign army, the personnel of which number much more than the island's army. Very few in Sri Lanka want the IPKF to be present there. Nor is its presence a matter of prestige and status of India. But, perhaps, nobody believing in responsible politics in the island would like the IPKF to quit lock, stock and barrel at least at the moment. The appropriate environment for this just does not exist. When would that environment emerge, is the most crucial question in the present-day Sri Lanka. As for the fair conduct of the parliamentary polls, several allegations of rigging and tampering have surfaced. But the group of observers from various states is yet to pronounce its verdict over these allegations. If the reports in the media were any indication, no serious rigging's example comes to light. Of course, there is no election where one kind of rigging or another does not come to light. The extent, then, is of essence.

As for the seats of various parties in the unicameral Parliament, the UNP has succeeded in establishing a clear-cut majority there. Out of total 225 seats, it succeeded in achieving 125, i.e. 55.55 of total, seats. However, several analysts tend to believe that this majority is not sufficient for effecting various constitutional amendments in the island. This does not, on the other hand, mean that there is absolutely no consensus in Sri Lankan politics on main issues. Relevantly, the Ceylon Workers' Congress, the champion of the plantation workers' (mainly of Indian extraction) interests, also fought on the symbol of the UNP. The SLFP succeeded in obtaining 67 seats, accounting for 29.77% of the total, in Parliament. It has strengthened its position in comparison to its position in the earlier House. The MEP and the USA also succeeded in obtaining 3 seats each.

On the basis of performance of various parties discussed here, one may safely suggest that the Sinhalese voters have overwhelmingly supported the traditionalist, moderate and constitution-loving parties like the UNP and the SLFP. In other words, they have rejected the thesis of nationalism based on violence by rejecting the call of the JVP. Of course, the JVP boycott

call had some impact in several districts of the south.

The Tamil voters have, however, thrown up a different scenario. Unlike the Sinhalese, they have mainly supported a political party which is relatively extremist, having faith in quick socio-politico-economic transformation. By electing 13 EROS candidates and voting 9 TULF-supported candidates to victory, the Tamil voters have chosen to show that they are not yet frustrated over the modus operandi of the young leadership of the Tamils. Relevantly, several supporters of the LTTE have also emerged victorious as EROS candidates. Significantly, there was heavy polling at the centre of the support of the LTTE. Some political analysts tend to believe that the LTTE has in this fashion tried to make its presence felt in the new Parliament, even if indirectly. On the other hand, there are others who believe that the EROS may eventually decide to boycott the new parliament. It will be some time before the true picture emerged.

After the announcement of election results, President Ransinghe Premadasa announced a 71-member Council of Ministers on February 18 and the ministers were sworn in by him on that day itself. He has not named anyone as Prime Minister and has left the

UNP Parliamentary Group to elect Prime Minister. It is regarded a truly democratic step. On the other hand, the President has shown his desire for accommodation. Significantly, immediately after the swearing-in ceremony, the President asserted that the continuance of Ministers would depend on their performance rather than on experience.

Apparently, the volcano of violence has erupted once again after the elections. It is to be seen as to how does the government deals with this problem. The most important question that occupies the centre-stage of Sri Lankan politics now is: can there be any lasting solution of the Tamil problem and can the LTTE be brought to the mainstream of the country's political life? The JVP is another serious challenge. Analysts tend to believe that President Premadasa has a true grasp of the country's politics, as he has risen from the soil.

One should optimistically hope that those practising violence to gain political objectives would realize soon that politics based on violence does not have a lasting future. The electoral process's success, despite all hindrances, clearly bear out the fact that people by and large want peace and tranquility in the island state.

Text Of The Ordinance Against Religious Institutions

Continued from page 11

6. No religious institution or manager thereof shall allow any ceremony, festival, congregation, procession or assembly organised or held under its auspices to be used for any political activity.

Punishment

7. Where any religious institution or manager thereof contravenes the provisions of Section 3, Section 4, Section 5 or Section 6, the manager, and every person connected with such contravention shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to five years and with fine which may extend to Rs 10,000.

8. (1) Any manager or other person, being an employee of a religious institution shall, upon conviction for an offence under this ordinance, stand removed from his office or post and shall, notwithstanding anything to the contrary contained in any other law, be disqualified for appointment in any religious institution as manager or in any other capacity for a period of six years from the date of his conviction.

(2) Where any person is accused of an offence under this

Ordinance and charge-sheet for the prosecution of the person is filed in any court and the court is of the opinion, after considering the chargesheet, and after hearing the prosecution and the accused, that a prima facie case exists it shall pass an order or direction restraining the person from exercising the powers or discharging the duties of his office or post pending trial.

(3) Where any manager or other employee has been removed under sub-section (1), or restrained under sub-section (2), the vacancy arising out of such removal or restraint may be filled in the manner provided in the law applicable to the said institution.

9. Every manager or employee of a religious institution shall be bound to give information to the officer in charge of the police station within whose local jurisdiction the religious institution is situated, of any contravention or any impending contravention of the provisions of this Ordinance, and any failure to do so shall be punishable under Section 176 of the Indian Penal Code.

Do You Know?

When was television invented?

John L. Baird of Scotland made the first simple television soon after the first World War. Public TV started in 1936 in Britain.

How does a television camera work?

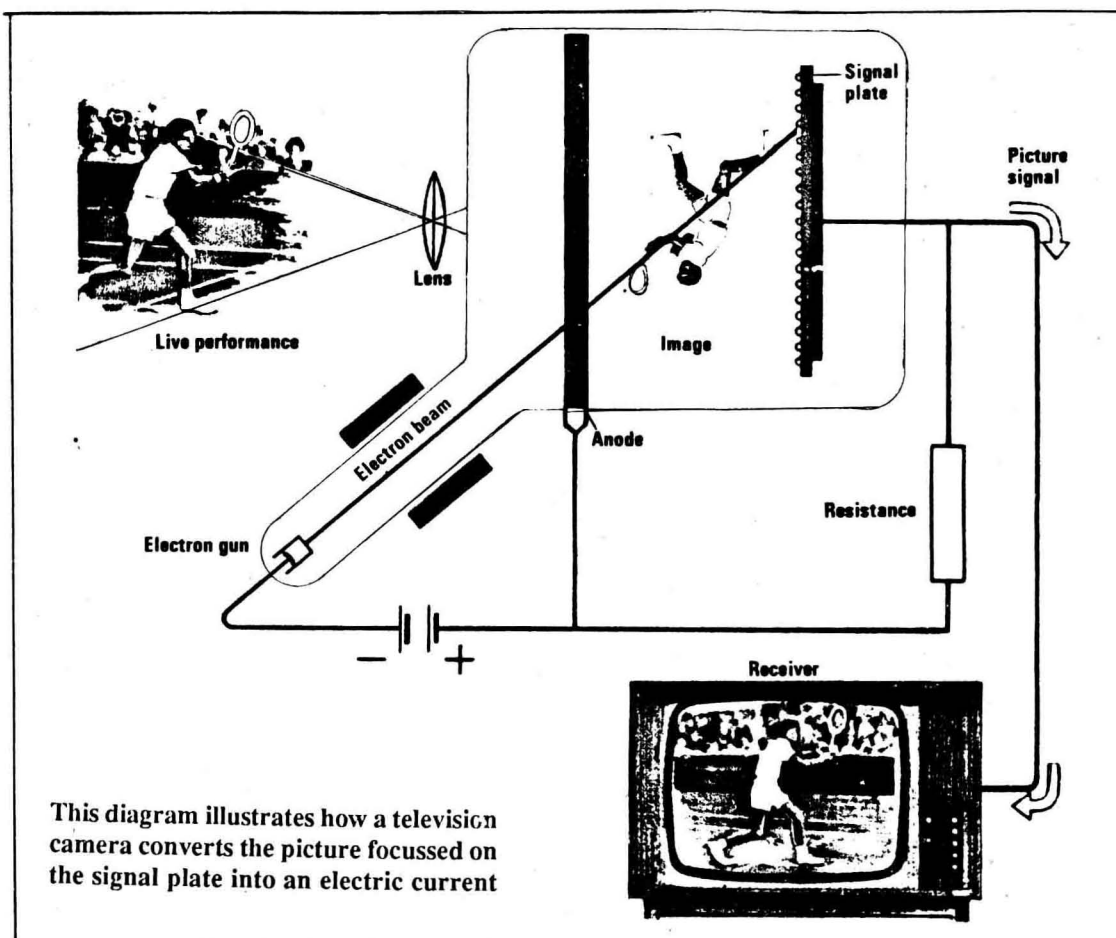
A TV camera has to convert a whole picture into an electric current. First of all a picture, called an 'image', of the scene in front of the camera is focussed onto a screen inside. A thin beam of tiny particles of electricity, called 'electrons', is fired at the screen, moving over it bit by bit. It works in lines across the image, one line under the other, in the same order as you read the words on a page. When it has scanned the whole screen, it starts again. The beam gives an electric current which is strong for bright parts and weak for dark parts. This current goes out along a cable or is transmitted as radio waves.

How does your television set make a picture?

The television receiver does the opposite of what the camera did. On your TV screen is a chemical that glows when electrons hit it. An electron beam moves across the screen exactly in step with the beam in the camera. The current sent from the camera controls the strength of the beam. A strong beam gives a bright spot, a weak beam a dark spot, making up the picture. The beam moves very fast and covers the screen completely fifty times each second, so the picture on the screen seems to change smoothly. Modern TV sets also pick up signals giving the picture's colour.

How widespread is the use of television?

Television is used in many industries. Banks and stores use 'closed-circuit'



This diagram illustrates how a television camera converts the picture focussed on the signal plate into an electric current

TV for security. Undersea oil-wells use remote-controlled cameras to check pipelines. Nuclear power stations use TV to watch dangerous areas.

But its most widespread use is broadcasting the pro-

grammes we watch at home. TV brings us entertainment, news and advertisements. Once people had to amuse themselves or go to a local theatre. Now millions can watch programmes live even. Instead of being able

to see just the place where we live, we can see, through TV, all over the world. Companies can reach millions of people at once to persuade them to buy their products

Still In Mystery The Phantom Lake

On the early 1940s the Swain family took a holiday near Beaulieu Abbey in the New Forest, England. One day they went for a picnic. They were driving down a country lane, looking for a suitable spot, when they came across a lake. It was the ideal place for their picnic. In the centre of the lake was a large boulder about 45

metres (150 feet) from the shore. On the top of the boulder stood a magnificent sword. 'We thought it was some sort of memorial to King Arthur,' said Mrs Swain.

On another visit to the area the Swains tried to find the lake, but without success. They consulted maps of the region, but the mysterious lake was not spotted any-

where. Every three weeks or so from that day forth, the Swains together with their sons Ted and Chris searched the New Forest without success. Over the next 17 years they made more than 250 trips to the area, but they never discovered the phantom lake they had all seen so clearly on that first visit.



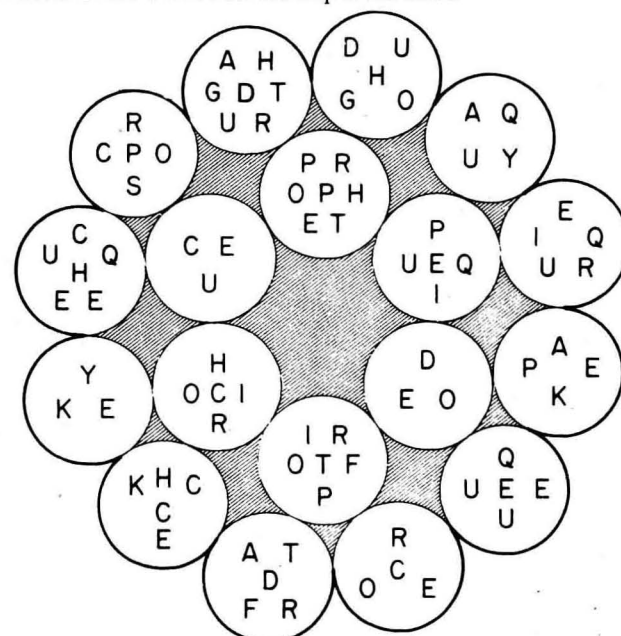
The President, Mr R Venkataraman attended the Rally of Cubs and Bulbuls, organised by the Delhi State Bharat Scouts and Guides at Rashtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi, on February 18, 1989.

Photo shows, the President, distributing the Certificates of Merit to selected Cubs & Bulbuls on the occasion.

Photo: S. MONDOL

Word's World Confusing Pairs

In the shape are nine pairs of scrambled words. Each pair sound the same but are spelt differently and have different meanings. Unscramble the words with the help of the clues.



- 1 Female deer; Mixture of flour and liquid
- 2 Line of people; Billiard stick
- 3 Company of singers; 24 sheets of paper
- 4 Summit; Resentment
- 5 Jetty; Device that opens lock
- 6 Isaiah, for instance; Financial gain
- 7 Central part; Army group
- 8 Rough plan; Current of air
- 9 Pattern of squares; Money order

Answers: Confusing Pairs

9. Check, Cheque
5. Quay, Key, 6. Prophet, Profit, 7. core, Corps, 8. Draft, Draught,
1. Doe, Dough, 2. Queue, Cue, 3. Choir, Quire, 4. Peak, Pique,

By Navin Chand

The Dronacharya Award was instituted in 1985 to honour and convey the recognition of the nation to coaches of eminence in the country. So far only five outstanding coaches have been conferred with this honour in different disciplines of sport, including the two recipients this year (for 1987). These two honoured coaches are: Guru Hanuman for wrestling and Gurcharan Singh for Cricket.

Gurcharan Singh is the national chief coach and imparts his training to his selected pupils in the National Stadium of Delhi. When contacted by THE FORUM GAZETTE, he gave a few tips for youngsters, who want to improve their game but cannot afford to go to National Stadium every day. His tips are:

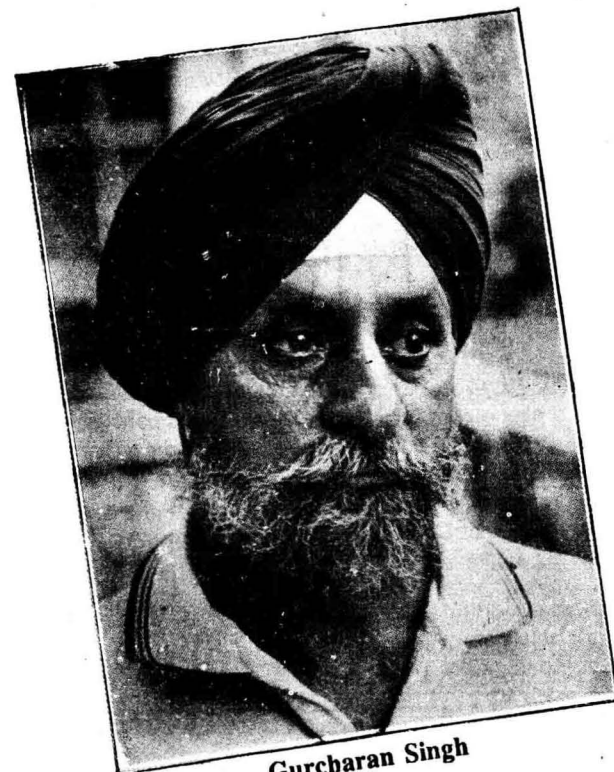
1. Go through coaching books. Some of the good books like "Art of Cricket" by Don Bradman and "Coaching Manual" by M.C.C. are worth giving a serious study. Not merely read them, try to grasp the meaning of each sentence. In case of a confusion, discuss it with the senior most player available or else note it down and whenever a senior cricketer or a recognised coach is available, discuss with him.

2. These books are good enough for learning basic techniques of the game like—choosing and handling the bat, advantages and disadvantages of various stances, gripping of the ball, length and angle of the run-up, actions of the finger/shoulder/wrist, etc. at the time of delivery. Further instructions like body-weight shifting at the time of delivery or the exact position of the body like head, neck and eyes are also mentioned therein and should be studied with due attention. Once the basics are mastered, the further sharpening can be done by watching Test cricketers in action.

3. Learn the vocabulary of the game. What is in-swing or out-swing or leg-cutter or the difference between a spinning ball and a turning ball. Likewise, field setting or vagaries of the pitch are the basics that are available in these coaching manuals. These should be strictly followed like the religious books.

4. Enlarge your circle of friendship with sportspersons. If one is living in a small town, an association should be formed involving all the sports-conscious persons—whatever their sport may be. Once a week "sangat" (gathering) would enrich the knowledge and help keep one in the game.

5. Choose the right equipments for yourself. Every single equipment is important in the game. Hence things like bat, shoes, gloves, thigh-pads, leg-guards and abdomen-guard should be selected with due prudence. Selection of the bat is most important. A player should choose a bat which he can wield comfortably. In other words, the bat should be like



Gurcharan Singh

an enlargement of his hand when he bats.

6. Develop the sense of a self-discipline. It is very important and most neglected factor. Don't do anything that your seniors/captain/coach or manager would mind. Always seek their prior permission if you are under compulsion of circumstances to be absent yourself from a coaching camp or a match.

7. Concentrate on practice. Continuous practice makes a player perfect. While doing practice, concentrate on what you are doing and keep guessing as to what further improvement can be done. Try to master your field with perfection.

8. Study your own faults. Whenever you are dismissed, don't start blaming the umpire or the pitch. Try to repeat the ball in the screen of your mind and make a note of the mistake done in playing that particular ball. If you fail to understand as how the ball should have been played, then think of your favourite Test cricketer like Gavaskar or Vishwanath and imagine how they would have played it. Try to adopt the same during net-practice.

9. Physical fitness is of prime importance. In the jet-age of instant cricket, it has become even more important. So do daily exercises. Running and jogging is the best exercise to keep oneself in trim and fit. Do some exercise that makes wrists more powerful.

10. Don't neglect your studies. Many youngsters are under the wrong impression that if they become player, they don't need

any academic qualifications. This misconception must be removed immediately. All the Test players today are atleast graduates. Hence plan your day in such away that the day to day studies are not

if it is being televised, one should not miss it. But don't merely watch it. Try to understand and learn from them. Try to analyse in your mind as how you would have played this ball and how the bats-

Study your own faults. Whenever you are dismissed, don't start blaming the umpire or the pitch. Try to repeat the ball in the screen of your mind and make a note of the mistake done in playing that particular ball. If you fail to understand as how the ball should have been played, then think of your favourite Test cricketer like Gavaskar or Vishwanath and imagine how they would have played it. Try to adopt the same during net-practice

neglected.

11. Watch the seniors in action. Whenever there is an opportunity to watch a first-class match or a Test-match, one must visit and see the cricketers in action. Even

man on the crease has played it. A budding cricketer must see the video tapes of the series made by Sunil Gavaskar, Mohinder Amarnath, Ravi Shastri and others to learn the intricacy of the game.



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